THE

# *UNIVERSAL RESTORATION,*

EXHIBITED IN

## FOUR DIALOGUES

BETWEEN A

## MINISTER AND HIS FRIEND;

Comprehending the ſubſtance of ſeveral real converſations which the Author had with various perſons, both in *America* and *Europe*, on that

## INTERESTING SUBJECT,

CHIEFLY DESIGNED

Fully to ſtate, and fairly to anſwer the moſt common objections that are brought againſt it from the

## SCRIPTURES.

By ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

To this EDITION is prefixed, a brief account of the *means* and *manner* of the author's *embracing theſe ſentiments*; intermixed with ſome SKETCHES of his LIFE during *four years*.

*PUBLISHED AT* WORCESTER, *MASSACHUSETTS:*
BY ISAIAH THOMAS, JUN.
Sold *Wholeſale* and *Retail* by him, at his Printingoffice in *Worceſter*, and by THOMAS & WHIPPLE, in *Newburyport*.
*October*—1803.

BX9941

## *From the* CRITICAL REVIEW,

*For* SEPTEMBER, 1788.

"OUR Author, with great candor and extenſive knowledge of the ſubject, diſcuſſes the doctrine of eternal puniſhments. He thinks that there will be a period when every ſinner will be reſtored to the Divine favor. This doctrine is perfectly conſiſtent with the benevolence of the Deity. It is ſupported by many wiſe and good men; nor is there any reaſon to ſuppoſe that it will be perverted *to ſerve* the purpoſes of vice and immorality. Mr. WINCHESTER, in his defence of it, ſhews much charity, much humanity, and no little ſhare of learning. The fifth Dialogue alone, which relates to the deſign and tendency of puniſhment, might furniſh ſome little foundation for a difference of opinion; but, in a queſtion ſo greatly above human attainment, the mind would be loſt in the inquiry, and not greatly benefited by the diſcuſſion. The queſtion of the univerſal Reſtoration, muſt be examined as Mr. WINCHESTER has done, by the word of God, as revealed at different times, and particularly in the Goſpel."

N. B. A conſiderable part of the fifth Dialogue, being printed in the *Lectures on the Prophecies*, is left out of this edition, and the remaining part is included in the fourth Dialogue.

LMW 1734

# PREFACE.

## *To the* READER.

AS I now present my Friends and the Public with a new edition of the Dialogues on the UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, which by many has been long desired, perhaps it may be acceptable to some for me to give a brief account how I came first to the knowledge of this part of the counsel of God, which I have not shunned freely to declare, both by word and writing, as I have found opportunity and necessity.

I think it was in the beginning of the year 1778, being in Southcarolina, upon the River *Pee Dee*, where I was at that time Minister, that I called to see a friend, who first put into my hands that valuable book written by *Paul Siegvolk*, and which is called *The Everlasting Gospel*, of which I have lately published a new edition. I was desired to tell what it meant to hold forth, as my friend could not tell by any means what to make of it on the account of the singularity and strangeness of the sentiments therein contained; although the language is very plain and clear, and by no means dark, mystical, or obscure.

I opened the book as I was desired, and dipping into it here and there, for half an hour perhaps, was very soon able to tell what the Author aimed at, viz. *that there would be a final end of sin and misery, and that all fallen creatures would be restored by Jesus Christ to a state of holiness and happiness, after such as were rebellious had suffered in proportion to their crimes.* I had never seen any thing of the sort before in all my life; and I seemed struck with several ideas that I glanced over, such as the inconsistency and impossibility of both good and evil always existing in the universe; and especially his observations upon the word *eternal* or *everlasting*, shewing that it was used for what never had a beginning, and would never have an end, as the being

being and perfections of God; and that it was also applied to things which had a beginning, but should never have an end, as the being and happiness of the righteous; and, that it was also frequently used to express things, times, and seasons which had both beginning and end; which he therefore called *periodical eternities*, and gave a great number of instances of this sort, which could not be denied; and he contended that the *everlasting punishment* threatened to the wicked, did not belong to the first nor to the second, but to the third class of these durations.

But as I was only desired to tell what the author meant, when I had satisfied my friend in that respect, I laid the book down, and I believe we both concluded it to be a pleasant ingenious hypothesis, but had no serious thoughts of its being true; and for my part, I determined not to trouble myself about it, or to think any thing more of the matter. And as the book had been sent a considerable distance for my friend to read, I suppose it was soon after sent back; for I saw it no more, nor heard any thing farther about it. The following summer I went a journey into *Virginia*, and happening to mention the subject to a minister there, he told me that a few years before, it had been a subject of controversy in the public papers, between a clergyman, who defended, and a gentleman of the law, who denied the proper *endless* eternity of punishment; and he told me that this gentleman who denied it, had advanced, that the translators of the Bible had rendered the very same Greek word, by very different English words, sometimes rendering it *for ever*, and sometimes *world*: and that if they had always uniformly rendered it by one English word, it would have been evident to all readers, that no argument for *endless misery*, could have been drawn therefrom. I was told also while I was in *Virginia*, that a clergyman of the episcopal church, had a few years before, given out that he had some wonderful thing to make known to his hearers, which he would preach upon some Sunday, but did not mention when. This raised the public curiosity, and great numbers attended his place of worship in hopes of hearing what this wonderful thing might be; but for a considerable time the matter was undiscovered. But at last he gave out, that on the next Sunday he would open this great secret. Vast numbers of people flocked to hear what it could be: When he came to declare what it was, behold! it was a wonderful piece of news indeed, such as had never been heard before in any pulpit in *Virginia*. It was nothing short of the doctrine of the *Restoration*. I think, to the best of my remembrance, they told me, that he opened and enlarged upon

on it for two Sundays, and never preached any more, being immediately after ſeized with ſickneſs, which terminated in his death. And this was generally eſteemed as a judgment that fell upon him for daring to preach ſuch a wicked, falſe, and dangerous opinion: and that God cut him off from the land of the living, to teſtify his diſpleaſure againſt him; and to terrify others from daring to following his example, or believe his ſentiments. But perhaps this might have been ſome worthy, learned, pious man, who had long concealed this grand truth in his heart, and had derived much ſatiſfaction therefrom, and longed to proclaim it to others, for their good. And at laſt, notwithſtanding the oppoſition that he might expect, reſolved ſo to do; and accordingly was enabled, juſt before his time came to depart out of this world, to bear a faithful teſtimony to his moſt grand and important of all God's purpoſes. And having performed his duty, his maſter called him to receive his reward, and gave him the glorious plaudit of, "Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant;—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

As for the vain judgments of men they are not to be regarded. "For they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither underſtand they his counſel." "But the ſouls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there ſhall no torment touch them. In the ſight of the unwiſe they ſeemed to die; and their departure is taken for miſery And their going from us to be utter deſtruction; but they are in peace. For though they be puniſhed in the ſight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chaſtiſed, they ſhall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himſelf. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and hath received them as a burntoffering. And in the time of their viſitation, they ſhall ſhine, and run to and fro, like ſparks among the ſtubble. They ſhall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord ſhall reign for ever. They that put their truſt in him ſhall underſtand the truth; and ſuch as be faithful in love ſhall abide with him; for grace and mercy is to his ſaints, and he hath care for his elect." "But though the righteous be prevented with death, yet ſhall he be in reſt."

I am apt to think therefore, that this miniſter was one of uncommon faith and love, and as he believed God, ſo he loved mankind, and wiſhed them to know the amazing riches of their Redeemer's love towards them, and when his had openly delivered this teſtimony, he was called to his reſt.

Indeed if the enemies of this doctrine had been true prophets,

prophets, I should have died and gone to hell long ago; for no sooner was it known I had embraced it, but some gave out that I would not live a year; but I have already lived eleven. One of my old friends desired me to take particular notice of what he said, which he expressed in these words, "Mind what I tell you. In six months from this time, you will turn Deist, and deny all revealed religion; and in twelve months you will turn Athiest, deny the being of God, and abandon yourself to all kinds of open wickedness." Blessed be God, this has also proved false. And they generally seemed to agree to prophesy certain damnation to me whenever I should depart out of this world. But I trust this is equally false, "For I know whom I have believed, (or trusted) and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

But to return to my narrative:

Sometime after I returned back to *Southcarolina*, a Physician with whom I had been acquainted in *Virginia*, came to live in the parish where I was minister; and among his books I found *the Everlasting Gospel*, by *Paul Seigvolk*; this was the second copy that had fell in my way, and I read a little more therein, but as yet had not the least thought that ever I should embrace his sentiments; yet some of his arguments appeared very conclusive, and I could not wholly shake them off, but I concluded to let them alone, and not investigate the matter; and therefore I never gave the book even so much as one cursory reading, till with great difficulty I procured one in the city of Philadelphia, more two years afterwards.

In the year 1779, I found myself much stirred up to exhort my fellow creatures to repent, believe, and obey the Gospel, and began to adopt a more open and general method of preaching than I had used for some years before; having been deemed one of the most consistent Calvinists upon the continent, much upon the plan of Dr. *Gill*, whom I esteemed almost as an oracle. But now my heart being opened, and viewing the worth of souls, I felt great compassion towards them, and invited them with all my might to fly for mercy to the arms of Christ, who died for them, and who was willing to save them. I was gradually led into this way of preaching, without considering any thing about its consistency with strict calvinism, but finding myself every happy and comfortable in my own mind, and that this method of preaching was highly useful, I continued to go in the same course.

About this time I began to find uncommon desires for the conversation and salvation of the poor negroes, who were

were very numerous in that part of the country; but whom none of my predeceſſors, that I could learn, had ever taken pains to inſtruct in the principles of Chriſtianity; neither had any ſingle ſlave, either man, or woman been baptized until that ſummer in the whole pariſh (which was very large) that I ever heard of.

The prejudices which the ſlaves had againſt Chriſtanity; on account of the ſeverities practiſed upon them by profeſſing Chriſtians, both miniſters and people, might be one principal reaſon why they could not be brought to attend to religious inſtructions. But they had no prejudice againſt me on the ſcore, as I never had any thing to do with ſlavery, but on the contrary condemned it; and this being pretty generally known, operated ſo upon the minds of thoſe poor creatures, that they ſhewed a diſpoſition to attend my miniſtry, more than they had ever ſhewed to any other. But ſtill I never had addreſſed them in particular, and indeed had hardly any hopes of doing them good. But one evening ſeeing a great number of them at the door of the houſe where I was preaching, I found myſelf conſtrained as it were, to go to the door, and tell them, That Jeſus Chriſt loved them, and died for them, as well as for us white people, and that they might come and believe in him and welcome. And I gave them as warm and preſſing an invitation as I could, to comply with the glorious goſpel. This ſhort diſcourſe addreſſed immediately to them, took greater effect than can well be imagined. There were about thirty from one plantation in the neighborhood preſent; (beſides others) theſe returned home, and did not even give ſleep to their eyes, as they afterwards informed me, until they had ſettled every quarrel among themſelves, and according to their form of marriage, had married every man to the woman with whom he lived; had reſtored whatever one had unjuſtly taken from another; and determined from that time to ſeek the Lord diligently. From that very evening they began conſtantly to pray to the Lord, and ſo continued; and he was found of them. I continued to inſtruct the , and within three months from the firſt of June, I baptized more than thirty blacks belonging to that plantation, beſides as many others, as in the whole made up one hundred, of which ſixty three were men, and thirty ſeven were women, all which were born in *Africa*, or immediately deſcended from ſuch as were natives of that unhappy country.

My preaching was not only uſeful to the poor ſlaves, but alſo to great numbers of the white people, of whom I baptized upon profeſſion of repentance and faith in Chriſt, about one

one hundred and thirty nine persons within the same space. This was a summer of great success, and I shall rememember that happy season with pleasure while I live. This summer I received some farther dawnings of the day of the general Restoration in my mind, for upon considering several Scriptures, such as these, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities," Isai. liii. 11. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" Rev vii. 9. I became fully persuaded that the number of the finally saved would equal if not exceed the number of the lost. And I was so forcibly impressed with this new and very joyful discovery, that I not only conversed in that strain privately, but boldly preached it in the congregation, which generally consisted of nearly a thousand persons upon Sundays. Some of the people to whom I had mentioned something respecting the sentiment, though that I was going at once to declare myself in favor of the *general Restoration*. But that was as yet far from being the case; though some of the arguments which I had glanced upon in that book, *the Everlasting Gospel*, would frequently present themselves to my mind in such a forcible manner that I could scarcely withstand their evidence.

In the month of September I left *Southcarolina*, on a visit to my friends in *Newengland*, intending however to return to my people again; but to prevent their being left destitute, I procured the Rev. Mr. *Botsford* to come and supply them, upon this condition, that whenever I should return, he should resign the congregation to me again, if I required it. But he has remained the constant Pastor ever since. I then travelled slowly through the continent, preaching to the people, and conversing with my friends, to whom sometimes in private I proposed some of the arguments in favor of the *general Restoration*, which I had read in the *Everlasting Gospel*, on purpose to see what answers they could give; and this I did especially to able Ministers; but to my surprise often found them quite at a stand, not knowing what to say. And some were almost overpowered with even the weak manner in which I was capable of holding forth the arguments in favor of the *Restoration*.— And oftentimes the answers that some of the greatest men gave, were such as tended to increase my doubts respecting *endless misery*, rather than to remove them. I remember

once,

once, that I asked the Rev. Mr. *Manning*, President of *Rhodeisland* College, and who was at that time one of my dearest friends, what was the strongest argument that he could use in favor of the doctrine of endless misery? He answered, That it was the nature of God, to lay the greatest possible restraint upon sin, and therefore he had threatened it with *endless punishment*, as the highest restraint he could possibly lay upon it. This argument is answered in the third dialogue. Thus after much seeking I could find no satisfaction in the matter; but still my doubts increased. Notwithstanding, I withstood the doctrine of the *Restoration* with all my might, and sometimes preached publicly against it with all the force I could muster. Yet there was something in its favor that gained gradually upon my mind, and sometimes brought me to be almost willing to embrace it. I plainly saw that it would reconcile almost, if not quite, all difficulties of other systems; and I thought if I should ever receive it, I should be able to preach much easier, and more freely than ever, and with far greater satisfaction, which by experience, I have since found to be true. The ideas were sometimes so transporting to me, even while I professed to oppose the sentiment, that I have been constrained to set them forth in the most sublime manner that I was able; and sometimes so as actually to bring them who heard me converse upon the subject to believe and rejoice in the *Universal Restoration*, while I thought myself an opposer of it, and only proposed the arguments in its favor to see what effect they would have on such who never heard them before. And I was often carried away before I was aware, even while I intended only to let my friends hear what might be said. I remember once, while I was at my father's table in the year 1780, that I mentioned the doctrine of the *Restoration*, and finding that none in company had ever so much as heard of such a scheme, I began to hold it forth, produced many arguments in its favor, brought up many objections, answered them in such a manner as astonished all present, and I was amazed at myself, I spoke with so much ease and readiness as I had hardly ever experienced before on any occasion. Nay, I was so much animated with the subject that I said, That I did not doubt but that in sixty years time, that very doctrine would universally be preached, and generally embraced in that very country, and would certainly prevail over all opposition.

This discourse made a greater impression upon the minds of those who heard it, and upon my own also, than I intended; and though I afterwards used the best arguments I could in favor of the common opinion, yet I found them insuffi-

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cient wholly to remove the effects of what I had before said.

After spending about twelve months in the most delightful manner, constantly journeying and preaching with great success, to vast multitudes of people in my native country, I set off with intention to return towards *Southcarolina*.—On the way I tarried some time at the house of the Rev. Mr. *Samuel Waldo*, in *Pawling's Precinct*, State of *Newyork*, whose kind and friendly behavior towards me I remember with pleasure, and mention with gratitude. I had a great deal of very agreeable conversation with him upon the matter, and he did not seem to oppose the ideas hardly at all; but only gently cautioned me against receiving any thing erroneous. He is a man of a most excellent spirit, and his family was upon the whole the most delightful, agreeable, and happy family that I ever knew. While I was at his house one of his children, then about twenty years of age, seemed fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine, by listening to our conversation,—and was filled with great joy at the idea. Several religious men who were on a journey, lodged at the house while I was there, got a hint of the matter, and wished to hear all that I could say in defence of it. I accordingly gave them some of the principal arguments in its favor, and obviated some of the most capital objections that could be brought against it; and I afterwards overheard them wishing that they had not been so curious as to have inquired so far into the subject, for they could not resist the arguments, although they seemed resolved to treat the sentiments as an error.

In this state of mind, half a convert to the doctrine of the *Restoration*, I arrived in the city of *Philadelphia*, on the 7th of October, 1780. I intended to have left the city in a few days, and to have gone on towards *Southcarolina*, but the Baptist church being destitute of a minister, they invited me to stop and preach with them, to which I was at length persuaded, and for some time I was much followed, and there were great additions to the church. The congregations increased in such a manner, especially on Sundayevenings, that our place of worship, though large, would by no means contain them; at length leave was asked by some of my friends for me to preach in the church of St. Paul, in that city, which was granted. This was one of the largest houses of worship in *Philadelphia*, and equal in bigness to most of the churches in *London*. I think I preached there about eighteen sermons, and generally to very crowded audiences, frequently more than could possibly get into the house; most of the clergy, of every denomination

nomination in the city, heard me there, and many thousands of different people. I am inclined to think, that I never preached to so many before nor since as I did sometimes in that house, and with almost universal approbation. But now the time of my trouble and casting down came on, and thus it was.

Soon after I arrived in the city I had inquired of some friend for *The Everlasting Gospel*, which I could not light on for some time, but they lent me Mr. *Stonehouse's* book upon the *Restitution of all Things*, which I had never seen nor heard of before; this very learned work I read with great care, and his reasoning, arguments, and scripture proofs seemed to me entirely satisfactory.

The friends who procured me the works of Mr. *Stonehouse*, were concerned at my having an inclination to read any thing upon such a subject; nevertheless, though there were several of them with whom I conversed pretty freely upon the matter, and who knew of my reading Mr. *Stonehouse's* works, yet they behaved in so friendly a manner towards me, that they never mentioned a word of it to any, until by other means it come to be known and talked of.

In the house where I lodged, when I first came to the city, I had, in the freedom of conversation, and with some appearance of joy, expressed myself in general terms upon the subject, but always in the exact words of scripture, or in such a manner as this, viz. That I could not help hoping that God would finally bring *every knee to bow*, and *every tongue* to *swear*; and that *at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth; and things under the earth; and that every tongue* should *confess* JESUS CHRIST to be *Lord to the glory of God the Father*. And that I hoped, *that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in* CHRIST, *both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*, &c.

Such passages as these I mentioned in this manner, hoping that they would be fulfilled. The people of the house seemed surprised, and asked me if I believed so: I answered, "That sometimes I could not help hoping that it might be so." I could hardly have imagined among friends, that any danger could have arisen from my expressing a hope that the scriptures were true.

However these false friends told a minister, whom for a number of years I had esteemed as my best and most intimate friend, that I was turned heretic, and believed the doctrine of the *Universal Restoration*, and desired him to convince

convince me. Some time after he met with me in the ſtreet, and in a very abrupt manner told me, that he had wanted to ſee me for ſome time, that he might give me a piece of his mind; that he had been informed by ſuch a perſon, that I was inclined to the doctrine of the *Univerſal Reſtoration*, and then, inſtead of uſing any argument to convince me, or taking any method for my recovery, added this *laconic* ſpeech, "If you embrace this ſentiment, I ſhall no longer own you for a brother." And he has hitherto been as good as his word, having never written nor ſpoken to me from that day to this; and when I have ſince offered to ſhake hands with him, he has refuſed; and yet he was one whom I eſteemed above any other on earth, as a hearty, ſincere, longtried, and faithful friend. If my intimate friend treated me in ſuch a manner, what had I not to expect from my open and avowed enemies?

I now foreſaw the ſtorm, and I determined to prepare for it, not by denying what I had ſaid, but by examining and determining for myſelf, whether the ſentiment was according to Scripture or not. If I found that it was not, I was determined to retract, but if it was, to hold it faſt, let the conſequences be what they might. I had now no time to loſe, I expected in a ſhort time to be called to an account, and examined reſpecting this doctrine, and obliged either to *defend* or *deny* it; I was already too well perſuaded that it was true, to do the latter without heſitation, and yet not ſufficiently for the former. For this purpoſe, I ſhut myſelf up chiefly in my chamber, read the Scriptures, and prayed to God to lead me into all truth, and not ſuffer me to embrace any error; and I think that with an upright mind, I laid myſelf open to believe whatever the Lord had revealed. It would be too long to tell all the teachings I had on this head; let it ſuffice, in ſhort, to ſay, That I became ſo well perſuaded of the truth of the *Univerſal Reſtoration*, that I was determined never to deny it, let it coſt me ever ſo much, though all my numerous friends ſhould forſake me, as I expected they would, and though I ſhould be driven from men, and obliged to dwell in caves or dens of the earth, and feed on wild roots and vegetables, and ſuffer the loſs of all things, friends, wealth, fame, health, character, and even life itſelf. The truth appeared to me more valuable than all things, and as I had found it, I was determined never to part with it, let what would be offered in exchange.

I had now formed my reſolution, and was determined how to act when the trial came. Hitherto I had ſaid nothing about the *Reſtoration* in public, and but little in private;

vate; but I preached up the death of Christ, and salvation for mankind through him, without restriction. This free manner of preaching gave offence to some, who came to hear me no more. On the evening of the 22d of January 1781, a number of the members of the church, who had heard that I held the doctrine of the *Restoration*, met me at a friend's house, to ask me the question, Whether I did or not? I acknowledged that I did, but did not wish to trouble any body with my sentiments. They desired me neither to preach them in public, nor to converse of them in private. I told them, That if they would prevent people from asking me, I would say nothing upon the matter; but if people asked me concerning my sentiments, I could not deny them, and if they wished to know the reasons, I must inform them. And thus the matter was to rest; but some that were present, wished to know the foundation of my sentiments, others opposed it, not wishing to hear any thing in its favor. At length it was agreed that I might read the passages of Scripture upon which I judged the doctrine of the *Restoration* to be founded, but must not add a single word of explanation on my part, and on their parts they were not to ask any questions, or make the least opposition, for if they did, I insisted upon the liberty of defending.

Accordingly I took the Bible, and read many passages in the Old and New Testaments, which I judged to contain the doctrine; and the very reading of them convinced several of the company of the truth of the *Restoration*. There was nothing farther took place at that time: We parted with a mutual agreement; I was not to preach it in the pulpit, nor to introduce it in conversation, but I would not be obliged to deny it, when asked, nor to refuse to vindicate it, if opposed; and on their parts they were not to speak of it to my prejudice, but to endeavor as much as possible, to keep the matter close, and so we parted. But notwithstanding all the pains that could be taken, the matter got abroad, and several came to discourse with me on my principles, to whom I gave such reasons as I was able for what I believed. A little after this time, I met with another copy of the *Everlasting Gospel*, which I then read through with attention for the first time, and found much satisfaction; the arguments and Scripture proofs therein contained, seemed to me sufficient to convince all that would read with candor and attention.

I still continued to act only on the defensive, not preaching upon the subject, nor going about to private houses to make interest in my favor; but if any came to me and wished me to discourse upon it, I would not refuse; and

thus a number were convinced of its truth, while others violently oppoſed it. And thus matters continued until the latter end of March. Having heard that the German Baptiſts in *Germantown*, about 8 miles from *Philadelphia*, held the doctrine of the *Reſtoration*, I had appointed to ſpend the firſt Sunday in April with them; and this engagement had been made ſometime: Juſt as I was ready to go out of the city on Saturday, I found that ſome of the members of the Church had privately ſent into the country, and collected a number of the ableſt miniſters, who were arrived in the city on purpoſe to debate, I gave them the liberty of my pulpit as they pleaſed for the next day, and went out of the city to go to *Germantown*; and took that opportunity to go and viſit that ancient, venerable, and excellent man, Dr. *George De Benneville*, who received me in the moſt kind, open, and friendly manner; and his converſation was moſt highly edifying to me. Afterwards I went to *Germantown*, and lodged there all night, ready to preach the next day. As ſoon as my enemies in *Philadelphia* found that I was gone out of the city, they ſpread a report that I had fled to avoid an interview with theſe miniſters, who had come on purpoſe to convince me.—Nothing could have been more falſe, than ſuch a report, for I had been engaged to go to *Germantown*, on that day, for ſeveral weeks beforehand: I knew nothing of theſe Miniſters being ſent for until they came to town; and I had no fear but I ſhould be able, by God's aſſiſtance, to defend the cauſe before them; and beſides, I had appointed to return on Monday, and did return accordingly. The whole Church met, both my friends and my oppoſers, and theſe Miniſters met with them. I was called to attend a funeral at the time, and was at the houſe of mourning, when a meſſenger was ſent in haſte, to deſire my immediate attendance at the meeting without any delay. I found that thoſe who were my enemies in the aſſembly, had been greatly vaunting over my friends, becauſe I was not preſent. They ſaid I had abſconded merely to avoid a debate, in which I was ſure to be confuted, as here was an opportunity that might never preſent itſelf again; and ſeven wiſe, able, and learned Miniſters had aſſembled on purpoſe to diſpute with me, but that I had gone, and left my adherents in the lurch, from a conſciouſneſs that I was not able to defend my cauſe; with abundance more to the ſame purpoſe. My friends, on the other hand, told them, That I was afraid of nothing but ſin, and that they doubted not of my being able and willing to diſpute with any one of the gentlemen, or all of them, one by one, if they choſe it. O, no; they replied, they knew better than that,

I was

I was gone out of the way on purpose, where I could not be found. My friends told them, That if there was a vote past in the assembly that I should dispute with any one, they would engage that I would be among them in a few minutes. It was accordingly unanimously voted, that I should dispute with the Rev. Mr. *Boggs*, upon my sentiments, in the presence of these Ministers, and of the whole assembly. But when in a few minutes I came in, and took my place, what different countenances appeared in the congregation? All my friends were highly pleased, and the others were as much confounded and disappointed, at seeing me come in so cheerfully and quickly, after they had made themselves so sure, that I would not come. But surely, I might have been looked upon with pity; alone to answer for myself, no one to support me; while my antagonists were seven of the ablest Ministers that could be obtained. I felt, however, that inward composure, from a consciousness of having acted uprightly and sincerely in the whole affair, that even caused my countenance to appear easy and cheerful.

The vote was then publicly read, and I stood up, and declared my readiness to comply with what was required.—The worthy gentleman who was chosen to dispute with me, then rose up, and said these words, "I am not prepared to dispute with Mr. *Winchester*, I have heard that he says, That it would take six weeks to canvass all the arguments fairly on both sides; and I suppose he has been studying upon the subject for a week or more, and I have not studied it at all; and therefore I must beg to be excused."

When I found that he, and all the rest wholly declined disputing with me, I begged liberty to speak for two hours upon my sentiments, and lay them fairly open, and the ground upon which I maintained them. But this was denied me; I then desired them to give me one hour for this purpose; but this was also refused. One of the Ministers got up, and said, That their business was not to debate with me, but to ask me, whether I believed the *Restoration* of bad men and angels, finally to a state of holiness and happiness, &c.

But if they did not come to dispute with me, why was the vote passed by their party, as well as by my friends, that I should dispute with them? This speaks for itself.—The ministers insisted upon putting the question to me, Do you believe the doctrine of the *Universal Restoration?* My friends objected to my answering the question, unless I might be allowed to vindicate my sentiments. But I said, That I did not fear any use that could be made of my words; that

that I had always freely confeſſed what my thoughts were, when aſked; and therefore I told them, that I did heartily believe the *General Reſtoration*, and was willing to defend it. The gentleman that was choſen to diſpute with me, then aſked me, whether I thought it ſtrange, conſidering my change of ſentiments, that there ſhould be ſuch a noiſe and uproar made upon the occaſion, &c. I told him, That I did not think it ſtrange at all; and gave him a little hiſtory of the affair, and how the matter came abroad, through the treachery of ſome whom I had eſteemed as my friends; that when I mentioned it to them I was not fully perſuaded of it myſelf, and perhaps never might have been, if I had not been oppoſed and threatened; that I never had intended to trouble the people with my ſentiments, but was willing to live and die with them, if they could bear with me; but that I could not uſe ſo much deceit, as to deny what I believed, when aſked by any one; that I never had yet done ſo, and by the grace of God never would, let the conſequences be what they might. What I ſaid was in the preſence of all my accuſers, and none of them could contradict me, nor had ought to lay to my charge, except in this matter of the Goſpel of my Savior. My diſcourſe took ſuch an effect upon him, that he then publicly declared, that my behavior in the whole affair had been as became a *man* and a *chriſtian*, and that no one could accuſe me of any improper conduct. I ſtood ſometime, and as none appeared to have any thing farther to ſay to me, I took my leave, and went out. He accompanied me to the door, and told me that he would write to me upon the ſubject; but whatever was the reaſon, he never did, nor have we ſpoken together ſince.

The Miniſters then adviſed the people to get another Miniſter; but my friends being numerous, inſiſted it ſhould be fairly determined by the ſubſcribers at large; but this the other party would not agree to. Several very fair offers were made by my friends to them, but they refuſed them all; and finally, by force they kept us out of the houſe, and deprived us of our part of the property, which was at laſt confirmed to them by law, though I think unjuſtly, as we were the majority at firſt; but they took uncommon pains in carrying about a *proteſt* againſt me, to every member of the church, both in the city and in the country, and threatening all with excommunication who would not ſign it; by which ſome were intimidated, and by theſe and other means they ſtrengthened their party. But on the other hand, I took no pains, either to proſelyte people to believe my ſentiments or to make my party ſtrong. But I believe near

an hundred of the members ſuffered themſelves to be excommunicated rather than to ſign the *proteſt* againſt me, and the doctrine that I preached. When we were deprived of our houſe of worſhip, the *Truſtees* of the *Univerſity* gave us the liberty of their hall, where we quietly worſhipped God for about four years, until we purchaſed a place for ourſelves. But to return. After this meeting of the Miniſters, the whole affair was open, and I found myſelf obliged to vindicate the doctrine which they had condemned unheard, not only in private, but in the pulpit. Accordingly, on the 22d day of April, I preached a ſermon on Gen. iii. 15, in which I openly aſſerted the doctrine of the *Final* and *Univerſal Reſtoration* of all fallen intelligences. This was publiſhed by particular deſire, with a liſt of the plaineſt Scripture paſſages in favor of the doctrine; and a number of the moſt common and principal objections, fairly ſtated, and anſwered. This was my firſt appearance in the world as a *proſe* writer, which was what I never expected to be, and probably ſhould never have been but for this occaſion; ſtill leſs a writer of controverſy, to which I had naturally a great averſion.

After I had preached this ſermon, I had the *Chevalier Ramſey's Philoſophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion* put into my hands; I read the ſame with great pleaſure and advantage, and I muſt acknowledge it to be a work of great merit, and I have reaſon to bleſs God that ever I had opportunity of reading it. I can heartily recommend it, as one of the beſt works in our language; and I muſt ſay, that in moſt things I fully agree with that very intelligent author. On the fourth day of January 1782, I preached the ſermon called, *The Outcaſts Comforted;* from Iſaiah lxvi. 5, to my friends who had been caſt out, and excommunicated, for believing this glorious doctrine. This was ſoon after printed, and the next year it was republiſhed in *London*, by the Rev. Mr. *Richard Clark*, and was the firſt of my works ever printed here.

I have thus given a brief, plain, and ſimple account of the means that have brought me to think and write in the manner that I have done, and which account may by conſidered as an hiſtorical ſketch of nearly four years of my life.

I have every year ſince printed and publiſhed ſomething, which I judged might be uſeful to my fellowcreatures; but as my works are in the hands of moſt of my friends, it is not neceſſary to give a particular account of any of them here, except this book of *Dialogues on the Univerſal Reſtoration*. I have had many diſcourſes with various perſons upon this ſubject, and many objections have been propoſed

to me, which I have endeavored to anſwer; and I can truly ſay, that theſe diſcourſes, their queſtions, and my anſwers, their objections, and my ſolutions, form the bulk of theſe *Dialogues*. I have endeavored to give all the poſſible force to their objections, and if any of them are weak I can aſſure the Public, that I have not made them ſo (as ſome have inſinuated) merely that I might be able to anſwer them, but the weakeſt of them have been propoſed to me, and I have fairly ſet down the moſt powerful that I ever heard, generally in the very words in which they were addreſſed to me, whether in converſation, or by letter; and I am willing if ſtronger objections can be made, to put them in the place of thoſe which I have ſet down, or add them to the number; and I have in this new edition added a few, which I have heard ſince the work was firſt publiſhed, and eſpecially one which was ſent me by a venerable Miniſter, from *America*, and which I have largely anſwered.

I have the ſatisfaction of knowing not only that theſe Dialogues have been well received, but that they have been the means of bringing many perſons to the belief of the truth of the *Univerſal Reſtoration*, and have ſtrengthened and confirmed others, as will plainly appear from the following extracts of letters, which I have received from ſeveral Miniſters in different parts of the kingdom, ſince their publication.

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WISBICH, October 26, 1788.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM perſuaded your knowledge of the world and its inhabitants, hath long ſince taught you to be familiar with the addreſſes of perſons unknown to you; and I have formed that opinion of you, that your candor will admit, and your generous mind rejoice to hear, that a perſon, though unknown to you, is convinced that God hath gracious deſigns towards univerſal man. I am that perſon, Sir. For ſome time paſt I have entertained doubts with reſpect to the *eternity of hell torments*. My doubts principally aroſe from the conſideration of the vaſt diſproportion between *momentary crimes, committed in this ſhort life*, and the ſuffering *infinitude* of puniſhment; yet many difficulties lay in my way that I did not know how to remove, and I continued thus embarraſſed, until a ſhort time ſince I had the happineſs to meet with your *Dialogues*

on

*on the Universal Restoration*, which, I thank God, have helped me much. My ardent prayer is, that the truth may spread, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified.

"My good friend, Mr. F———, shewed me your letter to him, by which I see your readiness to serve the cause of our great *Head*, Christ Jesus, and your willingness to visit the country, provided the way is open. Now, Sir, I can only say, That my house, and my heart, and my pulpit will be all open to receive you, provided you will visit us in this part of the world.

"I remain, with the utmost respect,
Dear, Sir, Your sincere friend,
HENRY POOLE."

"DEAR SIR,

"THOUGH personally unknown, have taken the liberty of addressing you with a few lines. I was lately in *London*, and called to see you; but was told you were out of town. Have for some time had the pleasure of reading your Dialogues, much to my satisfaction.

"The subject of *Universal Restitution* has for many years engaged my thoughts at times, and often appeared in an amiable light to my mind. It is a subject that redounds to the everlasting honor of God, and the everlasting felicity of the rational creature, who, when delivered from misery, shall be fully sensible of the obligations due to the Deliverer, and consequently, shall naturally be engaged in the great and delightful work of praising and honoring both the Author and Accomplisher of the great salvation.

"My residence is at *Lyndhurst*, in the *New Forest*, *Hants*, where I am pastor over a little church of General Baptists, of which denomination I am informed you are; but be that as it may, it is no small pleasure to me to find men, of whatever denomination, vindicate the goodness of God, in the manner it is done by the doctrine of *Universal Restoration*.

"Should inclination or leisure ever favor your coming this way, I know not who I shall be more happy to see and enjoy. Permit me to subscribe myself,

Your affectionate brother,
In the Gospel of universal love,
ADAM ALDRIDGE."

*Lyndhurst*, December 4, 1789.

"YORK.

"YORK, March 6, 1790.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"I HOPE you will excuse the freedom I have taken in writing to you.

"I have for several years embraced your sentiments, and have often stood up in defence of them.

"I have frequently met with learned and candid men, who have given me much satisfaction in this important subject. When your Dialogues were published, I procured and read them with the greatest avidity. I found the subject handled much to my mind. The strongest objections raised in all their weight and importance, and answered clearly and candidly. I read the book, over and over, with fresh pleasure and satisfaction. I studied the arguments, treasured them up in my memory, and determined to become a defender of this part of truth. My heart burnt in love to God and mankind. I found exalted views of God raised exalted strains of gratitude and praise. It was one of the strongest and most attracting views that ever I met with since I knew the Savior's love. I soon entered the field, and was obliged to prove my armor against the strongest objections, backed with prejudices almost of an invincible nature. When I was hard put to it, I had recourse to your Magazine, and from thence brought forth new pieces of artillery. You will easily suppose I had many trials from persons of different dispositions. By persuading several of my acquaintance, Ministers of the Gospel, to read over your book, I became an instrument of winning them over to the truth.

"One of my brethren in the ministry protested much against our notions, and declared he would never believe them. Knowing him to be a sensible man, and one who might be wrought upon by the force of truth properly stated, I used several arguments to persuade him to read the book. At length he consented, and said, that he would do it to oblige me, but was determined not to believe it. I told him, it would satisfy me for him to give it a candid reading.

"When we met again, I began to inquire what he thought of the book. He paused a little, and then freely acknowledged the effect that it had had upon him—He frankly declared that his resolution was just the same, as though he had resolved to look up to the Heavens when the sun shone at noon, and not to believe that it shone. I have secretly engaged several, and find when they are sensible, candid men, they fall in with your sentiments at once.

"I am acquainted with about half a score Ministers, who firmly believe and heartily embrace the doctrine; besides many private christians of different denominations. Most of us Ministers, who

fall

fall in with your sentiments, are afraid of confessing them publicly, for this reason, our people would thrust us out of the synagogues, and we and our families might suffer thereby. For my own part, I am determined to stand by this truth, whether I can continue my place among the people where I am or not. Rather than give up this (through grace) I would give up life.

"I have so much zeal in my heart for the confirmation and establishment of this truth, that I would, were it in my power, gladly proselyte all men to embrace and enjoy the benefit of it.

"I hope you will muster up all your resolution, and stand forth boldly again in vindication of the cause of truth, and the most glorious and most neglected part of that truth that all men ought to embrace. I fear lest the enemy shall cause a shout of triumph if you refuse again to engage, and do not come forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Please to inform me if you want any help where you are; I have some little fortune, and would engage in promoting the work of God, without being wholly dependent on any people.

"Direct to J. P. at Mr. *John Brown's* Bookseller, *Pocklington*, *Yorkshire*.

"Sincerely praying for the success of your labors, and your welfare of body and mind,

"I am in truth, your affectionate friend,
And servant in CHRIST JESUS."

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"AYLESBURY, September 22, 1790.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"AN anxious desire of a more intimate acquaintance with you induces me to take this liberty of writing to you, hoping you will excuse my freedom; undoubtedly it will appear strange, that one you never saw nor heard of, should take such liberty. But as a foe to flattery, I just give you this short account of my first knowledge of you; which was only by the hearing of the ear.

"Something more than a year ago, I was told that there was a preacher just come to *London*, *an American* by birth, who had undertaken to preach an *Universal Restoration* to lost souls. As it was new to me, I was much surprised at this strange account, and I thought and said, (though with some degree of candor) that I looked upon it to be some one that could not dig, and was ashamed to beg, so to procure a living he had written this book. Here I rested for some time, thinking that much hurt would be done thereby; till the last

time

time I saw Mr. *Atkins*, (who I understand is now in connexion with you) he gave me some further account of you and your doctrine. But I could not understand it from his account; yet he persisted I should believe it, if I was to read your *Dialogues*. I told him I would give them a fair reading, if I could see them. Still I entertained the same strange idea as before. The next account I had was from a young man of *Berkhampstead*, who came to see me, and in our discourse, I said, "Some of your people have imbibed a new doctrine, I hear." He said, "Yes, and I verily believe it a truth." I was now more surprised than before; but he said, if I was to see it he had no doubt but I should believe it also. "Well," said I "if I could see the book I would lay prejudice aside, and give it a fair reading, let it be what it may." He very kindly told me, that as soon as he could get it home, (for he had lent it to a friend) he would send it to me. I thanked him, and promised to read it impartially, knowing that where party spirit reigns, blindness takes place.

"According to promise, he sent the book; and as I had done before, I now laid the matter before the Lord, with this petition, that he would not suffer me to be misled, or wander out of the way, as I knew that he knew my desire and intention. I was delivered from fear, and with candor and confidence I began to read my new book, and to my great astonishment, yet to my greater joy, I found what I had many times wished for secretly in my heart, namely, the possibility of a release for those poor sufferers, and not only so, but likewise the certainty of it; for as I read on, I could not but see, that it was the determination of JEHOVAH to make all men, as his creatures, happy in himself. O with what eyes did I now view the Deity, and what ideas did I entertain of him to what I had ever done before! (though I was on the general plan) O how my soul was filled with love! what gratitude did I feel to that God, who I now saw so loved all his creatures, as to give his only Son to die, with a pure design to glorify himself in the salvation of every soul! I now saw him a God of love indeed, but it is out of my power to tell fully the happy effect it had, and has now upon my mind; but it is something like what I experienced, when the Lord first set my soul at liberty; as I was then swallowed up, as in the vision of God. But the bigness of this sheet is not sufficient to tell you all I could wish, but I trust I shall see you in person, as I should esteem it a privilege indeed to hear you preach, and to converse with you, and I fully intended coming to *London* about last May, on purpose, but as I had already a large family, which, through the blessing of God, I maintain with my labor; finding it likely to increase, I could not well spare time to come, or I had been with you at that season, as I had nothing else in my way to hinder. Mr. *John Holder*, of *Tring*, an acquaintance of mine, has lent me a few little tracts of yours, which I am now reading with pleasure and profit

profit, and he has kindly offered himself to accompany me at any time that I shall appoint to come and see you, but the same difficulty is now in the way as before. If ever Providence should open a way, I shall gladly embrace the opportunity. Though I have no doubt of the truth of the doctrine of the Restoration, as to myself, I have never spoke of it in public as yet, not knowing whether that may be the best way to make this glorious salvation known; but I have spoke to several of the people in private, those whom I judged to have the best understanding, and the most candor; and most of these seem to be glad at the news, and my own wife in particular it with all thankfulness, and joins with me in love to you and yours. (Though very ill at this time.) If it will not be attended with too much trouble, please to send me your *Dialogues*, bound, by the *Aylesbury* stage coach. I have given the coachman an order to pay the expense. As I stand like yourself (in this respect) unconnected with any party, (though I was with Mr. *Wesley's* people twelve years) I am now free, I trust from bigotry and prejudice, open to conviction, and willing for instruction. A few lines from you will be gratefully acknowledged, and thankfully received, by your affectionate, though most unworthy, may I say, brother in Christ,

"THOMAS HIGGINS."

P. S. "I pray God of his mercy to give you all the wisdom that you need, to make this great salvation more fully known, as I believe he hath raised you up for this purpose, and that a double portion of his Spirit may rest upon you, and that your labors may be crowned with more abundant success, till the Sun of Righteousness is seen in his full strength, and with all his ability to save.

"Direct to *Thomas Higgins*, *Aylesbury Bucks*."

I take the liberty of publishing these Letters, with the names and places of abode of the writers, as a kind of beginning of that general acquaintance, which I should wish to see take place among all the friends of this doctrine in these kingdoms. I know several other Ministers in England, who believe and preach the *Universal Restoration*, and I trust their numbers will increase. In *America*, where I once stood almost in these views alone, (among those who speak the English tongue) there are now many who testify this Gospel of the free universal grace of God, and they have formed a connexion of societeis on this plan, who meet by their Representatives in convention

tion yearly, at *Philadelphia*, and I could wish a plan of the same nature might be adopted in this country. If any thing that I have spoken or written may be of use to my fellow creatures, and may tend to promote the glory of God, and the interest of the dear Redeemer in the world, I shall have the satisfaction to reflect, that I have not wholly lived in vain.

London, April 2, 1792.

# CONTENTS OF THE DIALOGUES.

## DIALOGUE I.

OBJECTION.—That the words *everlasting*, *eternal*, &c. are applied to the punishment of the wicked.

ANSWER.—These words are but seldom applied to the misery of the wicked; being connected therewith only twice in the Old Testament, and but six times in the New; and are full as often connected with things and times that certainly have had, or will have an end, as they are with the misery of the wicked, &c.

OBJECTION.—But the words *for ever and ever*, are applied to the misery of the wicked, &c.

ANSWER.—This is a very strong phrase, and would be judged unanswerable, but for certain considerations.

1. If the phrase *forever and ever* intends any period or periods longer than the word *forever*, then there must be a proportion, &c. 2. This phrase as applied to future misery cannot intend *endless duration*. 3. It is more than probable that the lake of fire, in which the wicked will be punished with the second death, will be the earth dissolved by the general conflagration, &c.

OBJECTION.—*Forever* when applied to things of this life and world may end, but being applied to things of another state *must* mean *endless*.

ANSWER.—The word *forever* applied to spiritual things, and circumstances of another state must not be always understood to mean *endless*.

OBJECTION.—But does not the phrase *forever and ever*, in the New Testament always intend *endless?*

ANSWER.—It doth not. An undeniable instance brought in proof, to which several more might have been added.

OBJECTION.—But is not the Scripture chargeable with a design to mislead men in these words when applied to future misery, unless they intend *endless duration?* And does the limiting these words accuse Christ of duplicity and deceit in his threatenings?

The Hebrew word rendered *everlasting* properly intends a *hidden duration*, or period, but not *endless*.

OBJECTION.—The same word *everlasting* or *eternal* is in the very same verse applied both to the misery of the wicked and to the happiness of the righteous.

ANSWER.—The very same word is in other places applied to very different things, whose natures and durations are intirely dissimilar.

OBJECTION.—But upon the supposition that the doctrine of *endless damnation* was true, in what manner might one expect it to be expressed in the Bible?

ANSWER.—If it was true, there could be no promiſes, intimations, or even diſtant hints to the contrary. And it is therefore ſhewn to be falſe by a number of poſitive proofs. If there were not promiſes and intimations of the *General Reſtoration* in the Scripture, the doctrine of *endleſs damnation* might be then concluded to be true, however dark; but the *endleſs happineſs* of the righteous is ſet forth in much ſtronger language, and with more abundant force of expreſſion.

The *endleſs* happineſs of the righteous ſtands upon ſuch foundations that can never be overthrown or deſtroyed; ſuch as their indiſſoluble union with the original ſource of life and happineſs; their being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt, and the promiſe that they ſhall live becauſe he lives; and his life is truly *endleſs*.

OBJECTION.—That ſince the wicked have choſen evil and perſevered in it through life, it is become a fixed habit in them, from which it would ſeem as impoſſible to reclaim them, as to draw off the juſt from their attachment to God and goodneſs.

ANSWER.—This reaſoning is founded upon the old pagan ſyſtem of good and evil being two eternal coexiſting principles.

All men are God's creatures, and therefore he will not contend forever, nor be always wroth with the ſouls that he hath made.

Satan's kingdom and all evil ſhall be deſtroyed, and therefore *endleſs miſery* cannot have the ſame permanent foundation as *endleſs happineſs*.

Two things diametrically oppoſite to each other cannot both exiſt together to all eternity.

OBJECTION.—But does not the word *all* frequently intend a part only?

ANSWERED.—By giving certain never failing rules, whereby it may be known when the word *all* means ſtrictly *all*, or the whole univerſally without any exception; confirmed by plain inſtances out of St. Paul's writings.

OBJECTION.—That perhaps by *all* things being put under Chriſt, nothing farther may be meant than their being brought into a ſtate of forced ſubjection, or made ſubject to his controul.

ANSWER.—They are now put under him in this reſpect, but they are not yet put under him in the ſenſe that they ſhall be, which implies a ſtate of willing ſubjection.

The word *many* frequently means *all*.

All things were *created* by Chriſt; all rebellious beings ſhall be *ſubdued* by him, and all without exception ſhall be *reconciled* by him, and through him to God.

## DIALOGUE II.

OBJECTION.—Of the worm that dieth not, and the unquenchable fire, five times threatened by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in one paſſage.

ANSWERED.—By reference to the words in the prophely of Iſaiah, to which our Lord probably alluded.

Paſſages from the prophets brought to ſhew a literal accompliſhment of the original words.

The dreadful threatenings of future miſery to the wicked, implied in thoſe words of our Savior. They ſhall be publicly puniſhed and tormented in the lake of fire, which is the earth in its melted or diſſolved ſtate.

Nevertheleſs, there ſhall be a new creation of the earth, and ſo the lake of fire ſhall ceaſe.

Many inſtances of fires mentioned in Scripture, of which it was ſaid, *they ſhall not be quenched*, which yet have ceaſed long ago.

And of thoſe fires whoſe ſmoke is ſaid to aſcend up *for ever*.

Things contrary are often predicted of the ſame places and people, and muſt be underſtood as occurring at different times.

Our Lord's words of every one being *ſalted with fire* conſidered.

OBJECTION.—All the fires above mentioned were on earth, and in time; but the fire of hell, being in eternity, can never go out, or ceaſe to burn to all endleſs duration.

ANSWER.—Thoſe fires on earth that were *never to be quenched* did not continue to burn as long as the earth remained; and therefore there is no neceſſity of granting that the fire of hell ſhall burn to all eternity.

Puniſhments belong only to the ages of ages before Chriſt ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father.

OBJECTION.—The blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven, &c.

ANSWERED.—1. By ſhewing what this ſin is, &c. 2. All that bears the name of *death* ſhall be deſtroyed, and all ſorrow, crying, and pain, ſhall ceaſe and be no more. 3. Where ſin abounded grace ſhall much more abound.

OBJECTION.—The deplorable caſe of Eſau.

ANSWER.—He loſt the birthright, and the peculiar privileges that belonged to the firſt born, but yet he had a bleſſing from his father of a lower degree.

The great difference between them was more fulfilled in their poſterity than in their own perſons.

Love and hatred are ſometimes only comparative, and not poſitive terms, and only imply a preference of one to the other.

OBJECTION.—The great gulph between the region of happineſs and miſery is impaſſible.

ANSWER.—Chriſt has paſſed it, when he went and preached to the ſpirits in priſon, who were diſobedient in the days of Noah.

This proves a ſtate of conſcious exiſtence after the death of the body.

The rich man ſeems to have had compaſſion towards his brethren.

The Scriptures conſtantly hold out puniſhment in proportion to the ſins committed in the preſent life.

OBJECTION.—The caſe of Judas, of whom Jeſus ſaid, "Good were it for that man that he had never been born."

ANSWER.—1. This was a proverbial ſaying. 2. Both Job and Jeremiah curſed the day of their birth, and wiſhed they had never

been born. 3. Solomon declares an untimely birth to be far better than the longeſt and moſt proſperous life of one whoſe ſoul is not filled with good, and who hath no burial. 4. If Judas had died before he was born he would have eſcaped all earthly trouble, and future miſery, and would have been immediately happy. 5. The Jews as much rejected and doomed to woe as Judas.

## DIALOGUE III.

OBJECTION.—That the doctrine of the Reſtoration tends to licentiouſneſs, and is calculated to encourage the wicked to a continuance in their evil ways, &c.

ANSWERED.—*Firſt*, by ſhewing the principles upon which the doctrine of the Reſtoration is founded. 1. God is the Creator of all. 2. His benevolence is univerſal. 3. Chriſt died for all without exception.

OBJECTION.—That Chriſt did not die for all, becauſe he did not pray for all.

ANSWER.—This objection is entirely groundleſs; for, though in one place he prays excluſively for his apoſtles, yet a little after he prays for all that ſhould believe on him, through their word, &c. 4. Another of the firſt principles on which the doctrine of the univerſal Reſtoration is founded, is the unchangeableneſs of God. 5. The immutability of his counſels; confirmed by his oath. 6. That God hath given all things into the hands of Chriſt, and that nothing that is given to him ſhall be loſt. 7. That the Scriptures muſt be fulfilled, and that none of them can be broken.

*Secondly*, It is proved that the doctrine of the Reſtoration cannot lead to licentiouſneſs, becauſe it is perfectly conſiſtent with experimental religion. Queries aſked upon this ſubject. A little ſketch of the author's experience. Queries ſubmitted to the conſideration of all experienced Chriſtians. Inference deduced therefrom in favor of the doctrine of the Reſtoration.

*Thirdly*, It is proved, that the doctrine of the Reſtoration does not lead to licentiouſneſs, by its tendency to practical religion. 1. We are commanded to love all mankind, even our enemies. 2. To do good to all. 3. To forgive all that treſpaſs againſt us. 4. To pray for all men, that they may be ſaved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

The belief of the Reſtoration ſo far from preventing us from theſe things, enables us to perform them with pleaſure and conſiſtency.

All ſhall be reſtored at laſt by the blood of Chriſt.

*Fourthly*, It is proved, That the doctrine of the Reſtoration is according to godlineſs, becauſe the belief of it tends to fill our hearts with all amiable tempers, &c.

*Fifthly*, The doctrine of the Reſtoration is vindicated from the charge of licentiouſneſs, by an appeal to facts, eſpecially by the amiable conduct of the *Tunkers*, or German Baptiſts, in America, who univerſally hold theſe ſentiments.

Reply to thoſe who call this the doctrine which Satan taught Eve in the Garden.

Dr. *Whitby's* grand objection, That the unbeliever ſhall not ſee life, anſwered.

OBJECTION.—The doctrine of endleſs puniſhment ſaid to be the ſtrongeſt poſſible reſtraint upon ſin.

ANSWERED.—1. By ſhowing that God doth not always lay the greateſt poſſible reſtraint upon ſin. 2. The idea of limited puniſhment by appearing more juſt and reaſonable to the mind, is more calculated to reſtrain ſin and iniquity than the doctrine of endleſs miſery. 3. That in fact, though the greater part have profeſſed to believe endleſs damnation, yet their belief appears not to have much reſtrained them from ſin. 4. The great number of heathen people that die without ever hearing the Goſpel, infants, ideots, perſons born deaf, &c. render it probable that many are reclaimed in a future ſtate. 5. That the intention of God is not ſo much to reſtrain ſin, as to ſhow its enormity; and finally to deſtroy it out of the univerſe. 6. If the doctrine of the Reſtoration ſhould be abuſed, that can be no argument againſt it, as the Goſpel itſelf has been perverted, yet is the greateſt bleſſing to mankind; therefore it is evident that this glorious doctrine cannot juſtly be charged with the leaſt tendency towards licentiouſneſs.

OBJECTION.—It would not be prudent in God, even if he intended finally to reſtore the wicked, to let them know his gracious deſigns beforehand; it is time enough to let them know his gracious purpoſes towards them, when his former threatenings have failed of their effect, but not before.

ANSWERED.—God has thought it the abounding of his wiſdom and prudence to make known to his ſaints this myſtery of his will, even his purpoſe to rehead all things in Chriſt. This diſcovery is chiefly intended for the comfort and ſatisfaction of the good, and not for the encouragement of the bad.

God has frequently mixed promiſes of great mercies with threatenings of terrible judgments; yet his threatenings are not thereby weakened.

OBJECTION.—The doctrine of the Reſtoration ſeems not very plainly revealed in the Scripture, or it would not have been ſo long hidden from ſo many great and good men.

ANSWER.—Things that have been plainly revealed, have been ſtill hidden from great and good men; as the death and reſurrection of Chriſt.

QUESTION.—But how comes this man to know better than all the world? &c.

ANSWER.—The charge denied. Many have known, believed, preached and defended it.

The doctrine of endleſs miſery is one principal cauſe of the diſagreement among Chriſtians.

## DIALOGUE IV.

OBJECTION.—Chriſt threatens the Jews that they ſhould die in their ſins, and that they could not come whither he went.

ANSWER.—OurLord told his diſciples themſelves that whither he went, they could not come, that is, then, as afterwards explained.

2. There are bleſſings promiſed in ſcripture, to all Iſrael, without exception.

3. Thoſe that have been rejected and caſt off ſhall at laſt return, and be received.

OBJECTION.—That the bleſſings promiſed only reſpect thoſe that ſhall be found alive on the earth at a certain time.

ANSWER.—The inhabitants of Sodom, Samaria and Jeruſalem, with their daughters, or neighboring cities, ſhall all be reſtored, though deſtroyed long ago.

2. That all things are given to Chriſt, without exception; and that all that are given ſhall at laſt come to him in ſuch a manner as not to be caſt out. From which premiſes, the Univerſal Reſtoration is inferred, and proved to be certainly true.

OBJECTION.—God ſware in his wrath that the Iſraelites ſhould not enter into his reſt.

ANSWER.—The reſt was the land of Canaan, being typical of the time of the Millennium, or Chriſt's reign on earth, and not of the ultimate ſtate of happineſs.

OBJECTION.—There are ſome of whom we read, That he that made them will not have mercy upon them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favor.

ANSWER.—Theſe words muſt neceſſarily be underſtood with ſome limitation, and refer to a particular ſeaſon, when they ſhall have judgment without mercy, but finally mercy ſhall rejoice againſt judgment.

OBJECTION.—That the wicked ſhall never ſee light.

ANSWER.—Not until ſubdued, or overcome, as the words ought to be rendered.

OBJECTION.—A great ranſom cannot deliver thoſe who are taken away by the ſtroke of God.

ANSWER.—The great ranſom cannot intend the blood of Chriſt, the power of which is unlimited, but gold, and all the forces of ſtrength, riches, wiſdom, &c. none of theſe can deliver their poſſeſſors from death.

OBJECTION.—Solomon ſays, That there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave; and that in the place where the tree falleth, there it ſhall be.

ANSWER.—The firſt part of this objection reſpects only the ſtate of the body in the grave, but cannot be brought to diſprove the conſciouſneſs of the ſoul in a ſeparate ſtate, the reſurrection of the body, a future ſtate of exiſtence, or the final Reſtoration.

The ſecond part of the objection has not the leaſt relation to the ſubject; but belongs to quite another matter.

# *FAMILIAR DIALOGUES*

BETWEEN A

# MINISTER & HIS FRIEND.

## DIALOGUE I.

*Friend.* I HAVE taken the freedom to call upon you, to have a little diſcourſe with you concerning the doctrine of *the Reſtoration of all Things*, which it is ſaid you believe; and to propoſe ſome objections.

*Miniſter.* I am happy to ſee you, and am willing to diſcourſe, as well as I am able, upon any ſubject that may be agreeable; but I have always made it a rule never to preſs the belief of my ſentiments upon my friends; and I can ſafely ſay, that, though ſuch great pains have been taken by my adverſaries to prejudice people againſt me, I have never gone about from houſe to houſe to propagate my opinions; and I make it an univerſal rule not

to

to introduce the subject in conversation, unless desired; but yet I never have refused to own my sentiments, when asked, respecting the matter; and am ready, in the fear of God, to answer any objections that can be made, to a doctrine which I believe is plainly revealed in the Scriptures of truth, and appears to me worthy of God.

*Friend.* I shall first of all bring to view that grand objection, which is formed from the word *eternal* or *everlasting*, being applied to a future state of punishment; as in the following passages: Isaiah xxxiii. 14. "The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with *everlasting* burnings?

Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting* life, and some to shame and *everlasting* contempt."

St. Matt. xviii. 8. "Wherefore, if thine hand or thy foot offend thee (or cause thee to offend) cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into *everlasting* fire."

St. Matt. xxv. 41. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Verse 46, "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment; but the righteous into life *eternal* or *everlasting*."—The same word in the original being used for both, though varied by the translators.

St.

St. Mark, iii. 29. "But he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath never forgiveneſs; but is in danger of *eternal* damnation."

2 Theſ. i. 7, 8, 9. "The Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall be puniſhed with *everlaſting* deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Jude, 6, 7. "And the Angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath reſerved in *everlaſting* chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day: Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themſelves over unto fornication, and going after ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire."

Theſe texts, together, form ſuch an objection to the doctrine of the Reſtoration, that I can by no means believe it, unleſs this can be fairly anſwered, and proofs brought from the Scriptures to ſhew, that the words *everlaſting* and *eternal*, (which are tranſlations of the ſame word and ſynonimous) being connected with the puniſhment of the wicked, and their future miſery, do not neceſſarily imply the continuance of the ſame while God exiſts.

*Miniſter.* I am glad that you have ſo fairly and fully ſtated the matter; and I highly commend your reſolution, not to believe the *univerſal doctrine*, unleſs this can be anſwered fully, without any torturing or twiſting the Scriptures; and if I

am

am not able, with God's assistance, to remove this difficulty, I will publicly recant my sentiments.

But, before I come to give a direct answer, I would beg leave to remark how very seldom this word is used to express the duration of punishment. We should think, by some sermons we hear, that *everlasting* is applied to misery in every book of the New Testament, if not in every chapter. A friend of mine told me, that he was once preaching in Maryland, and after sermon a man came and asked him, of what denomination he was? To which he answered, A Baptist. I think, says the man, that you do not preach up so much *everlasting damnation*, as the Baptists and methodists, among us do. To which my friend replied, *Everlasting damnation* is found in the Scripture. True, answered the man; but some preachers give us more of it in one sermon than is to be found in the whole Bible. The truth of this remark will appear, if we consider that St. Luke, never uses the word *aionion*, or *everlasting*, as connected with the misery of the wicked, in his gospel; nor St. Mark but once, and then in a particular case only: In the gospel of St. John, it is not to be found at all, in that connection, nor in any of his epistles: In the account of the preaching of the apostles through the world, in the first age of Christianity, we do not find it mentioned, in that light, so much as once: No, not in all the sermons, and parts of sermons, which St. Luke has preserved in the Book of the Acts; though the doctrine of *everlasting damnation* is the substance of many modern discourses. St. Paul never mentions *everlasting destruction* but once, though his writings form such a considerable part

of

of the New Teſtament. Neither are ſuch words found in the epiſtle of St. James, or in thoſe of St. Peter; and but three times in the goſpel of St. Matthew: And only twice in all the Old Teſtament. But was the word *aionion* applied to miſery but once, in the whole Bible, it would deſerve a ſerious conſideration; and unleſs the force of it can be removed by the authority of Scripture, it muſt remain an unanſwerable objection. But I ſhall proceed to anſwer it, by bringing an equal number of paſſages where the word *everlaſting* is applied to *things* and *times*, that have had, or muſt have, an end. As in the following paſſages: Gen. xvii. 7, 8. "And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlaſting* covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee, the land wherein thou art a ſtranger, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlaſting* poſſeſſion; and I will be their God." Verſe 13. "He that is born in thy houſe, and bought with thy money, muſt needs be circumciſed; and my covenant ſhall be in your fleſh for an *everlaſting* covenant.

Here note, that the land of Canaan is called an *everlaſting* poſſeſſion; and the covenant of circumciſion in their fleſh, an *everlaſting* covenant, though it is certain that the land of Canaan, as well as the other parts of the earth muſt be diſſolved or melted, in the general conflagration; and *circumciſion* is now declared null and void by the Holy Ghoſt; and the ceremony cannot endure to endleſs ages.

Of the ſame kind are the following paſſages: Gen. xlviii. 3, 4. "And Jacob ſaid unto Joſeph, God Almighty appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and bleſſed me; and ſaid unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy ſeed after thee, for an *everlaſting* poſſeſſion."—And in the bleſſing of Joſeph, he ſays, "The bleſſings of thy father have prevailed above the bleſſings of my progenitors, unto the utmoſt bound of the *everlaſting* hills." By which, I ſuppoſe, the hills of the land of Canaan were meant.

God ſaith to Moſes, Exod. xl. 15. "And thou ſhalt anoint them (Aaron's ſons) as thou didſt anoint their father, that they may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's office; for their anointing ſhall ſurely be an *everlaſting* prieſthood, throughout their generations." Lev. xvi. 34. And this ſhall be an *everlaſting* ſtatute unto you, to make an atonement for the Children of Iſrael, for all their ſins, once a year; and he did as JEHOVAH commanded Moſes."

The apoſtle declares, that theſe *everlaſting* ordinances were only *till the time of reformation*, Heb. ix. 10. And this *everlaſting* prieſthood of Aaron's ſons has ceaſed long ago: "For the prieſthood being changed, (by Chriſt) there is, of neceſſity a change alſo of the law: For he of whom theſe things are ſpoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar: For it is evident, that our Lord ſprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concerning prieſthood. And it is yet far more

more evident: For that, after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedek, there ariſeth another prieſt, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life: For he teſtifieth, Thou art a prieſt for ever, after the order of Melcheſidec: For there is verily a diſannulling of the commandment going before for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof." Heb. vii. 12—18. The whole ſum of the apoſtle's argument, in this epiſtle, tends to prove, that the *everlaſting* ordinance is now no more; and the *everlaſting* prieſthood of Aaron and his ſons, is now aboliſhed.

Another paſſage where the word *everlaſting* is evidently uſed in a limited ſenſe, is, Numb. xxv. 11, 12, 13, where we read thus: "Phinehas, the ſon of Eleazar, the ſon of Aaron the prieſt, hath turned my wrath away from the Children of Iſrael while he was zealous for my ſake among them, that I conſumed not the Children of Iſrael in my jealouſy. Wherefore ſay, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he ſhall have it, and his ſeed after him, even the covenant of an *everlaſting* prieſthood; becauſe he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the Children of Iſrael."

If the word *everlaſting* intends *endleſs duration*, how ſhall we be able to reconcile this promiſe with the total ceſſation of the Levitical prieſthood? As for the family of Phinehas, with whom this covenant of an *everlaſting* prieſthood was made, it was entirely deprived of the benefit of the ſame, within the ſpace of four hundred years: For when the ſons of Eli tranſgreſſed the covenant, by profaning it, God ſent him word, that as they had broken

broken it on their parts, it was entirely, and to all intents and purpoſes diſſolved. Read 1 Sam. ii. from the beginning of the 12th verſe to the end of the 17th, and from the 27th verſe to the end of the chapter: And alſo, chap. iii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

I will tranſcribe verſe 30, of the ſecond chapter, in proof of my point. "Wherefore, JEHOVAH, God of Iſrael, ſaith, I ſaid, indeed, that thy houſe, and the houſe of thy father ſhould walk before me *for ever*: But now JEHOVAH ſaith, Be it far from me, for them that honor me, I will honor; and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed." Hophni, and Phinehas, were ſoon after ſlain in one day; and Saul, the king of Iſrael, ſent Doeg, the Edomite, who fell upon the prieſts, and ſlew fourſcore and five perſons, who wore a linen ephod, in one day. "And Nob, the city of the prieſts, ſmote he with the edge of the ſword; both men, and women, and children, and ſucklings, and oxen, and aſſes, and ſheep, with the edge of the ſword." 1 Sam. xxii. 19. The whole houſe of Phinehas ſeems to have been deſtroyed at this time, except Abiathar; and when Solomon came to the throne, he thruſt him out from being prieſt, "that he might fulfil the word of JEHOVAH, which he ſpake concerning the houſe of Eli, in Shiloh," 1 Kings, ii. 27. From this time, the houſe of Ithamar had the prieſthood.

It is ſo evident that the word which is tranſlated *everlaſting*, cannot in the nature of things, abſolutely ſignify, *without end*, that I ſhould not think it worth while to quote any more paſſages in proof of its intending *age*, or *ages*, only, were it not conſtantly uſed as a great objection againſt the univerſal Reſtoration: I ſhall, therefore, inſtance two or

or three more in particular, in this place, and refer to a great number of others, of the ſame kind; all tending to prove the ſame thing. Hab. iii. 6. "The *everlaſting* mountains were ſcattered, the *perpetual* hills did bow." The goſpel is called, the *everlaſting* goſpel," Rev. xiv. 6, yet it muſt ceaſe to be preached, when it ſhall be needed no longer. Jonah, ſaith, "The earth with her bars was about me, *for ever;* yet haſt thou brought up my life from corruption; O JEHOVAH, my God." Jonah, ii. 6. But it would be the higheſt abſurdity upon the ſuppoſition that the word *Legnolam*, here rendered, *for ever*, properly ſignifies *without end*, for him to ſay, that his life was brought up from corruption; and, therefore, we know that he could not uſe it in that ſenſe, becauſe, on the third day, he was delivered from his dreadful priſon. There is no doubt but the time that he was there, ſeemed an age, and, while he was thus ſhut up, there was no intermiſſion to the darkneſs, and diſtreſs, that overwhelmed him; and, therefore he might ſay, with propriety, that the earth, with her bars, was about him, for ever," (i. e. *perpetually without ceſſation)* during the period he remained in the fiſh's belly; which appeared to him, as a long age indeed. But, as it would be a work of much time and labor to mention all the paſſages where the word tranſlated *for ever*, evidently intends only an age, or period, I ſhall juſt direct you to the following; which you may look over at your leiſure.

Gen. xiii. 15. xliii. 9. xliv. 32.—Exod. xii. 14, 17, 24. xxi. 6. xxvii. 21. xxviii. 43. xxix. 9, 28. xxx. 21. xxxi. 16, 17. xxxii. 13.—Lev. iii. 17. vi. 13, 18, 20, 22. vii. 34, 36. x. 9, 15. xvi. 29,

31. xxiii. 14, 21, 31, 41. xxiv. 3. xxv. 30, 46.—Numb. x. 8. xv. 15. xviii. 8, 19. xix. 10.—Deut. iv. 40. xv. 17. xviii. 5. xxviii. 46.—Joshua iv. 7. xiv. 9.—1 Sam. ii. 30. iii. 13. xxvii. 12. xxviii. 2.—1 Kings, xii. 7.—2 Kings, v. 27.—2 Chron. x. 7.

Here are more than fifty passages, where the word rendered *for ever* intends only *age*, or *ages*; to which many more might be added.

Now, the rule for understanding words is this: What *must* be the meaning of the word, in *many* places, and what *may* be the meaning in *all*; is the true sense of the same.

*Friend.* Although the single word *forever*, in these passages, seems evidently to intend certain unknown, *limited* periods; yet, what can you do with those texts that say, the misery of the wicked shall endure *for ever and ever?*

*Minister.* Indeed, they are terrible threatnings; and, no doubt, will be fully executed.

*Friend.* But, do you imagine that such passages as the following can intend less than *endless misery?* Rev. xiv. 11. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up, *for ever and ever*; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. xix. 3. "And here smoke rose up *for ever and ever.*" Rev. xx. 10. "And the devil, that deceiveth them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented, day and night, *for ever and ever.*"

*Minister.* I confess, you have proposed a difficulty that I should judge to be unanswerable, were it not for the following considerations;

1*st.* If-

1*st.* If *forever and ever* is a longer time than *for ever*, which must be granted; then is there some proportion between them: Thus, if *for ever* intends an *age*, *period*, or sometimes *ages*; *forever and ever*, may intend *ages*, an *age* of *ages*, or *ages* of *ages*: But any *proportion* at all between two periods, supposes both *to have an end*, or there could *be no proportion.*

2*dly.* I find a time promised, when, "there shall be no more death; neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are (or shall then be) passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, (John) Write; for these words are true and faithful." Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

3*dly.* I think there is sufficient reason, from the words of St. Peter, in his second epistle, third chapter, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 verses, to conclude, that as the earth was once overflowed with water, and became truly a lake of water, wherein the world of ungodly men perished; so, by the general conflagration, the same shall become literally the lake of fire and brimstone, in which the wicked shall be punished after the day of judgment: But I also think, that the 13th verse of the same chapter, compared with Rev. xxi. 1. Isaiah lxv. 17. lxvi. 22, more than intimates, that the new heaven and earth shall be created out of the substance of the old, dissolved by the fire; that the *new earth* shall no more have a *sea* therein, seems to imply, that in its former state, it had a *sea*, or why this expression, "And there was no *more* sea."—Now, if this hypothesis is right, the following will be the true state of the case; *viz.*

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The lake of fire is expreſsly declared to be "the ſecond death," Rev. xx. 14. The earth, in its burnt, melted and diſſolved ſtate, will be the general lake of fire and brimſtone; according to the verſes above cited from St. Peter. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, created out of the ſubſtance of the old, in which there will be no more ſea, either of water, or of liquid fire; conſequently, the lake of fire, or ſecond death, (which are declared to be ſynonimous) muſt end; and, of courſe, the puniſhment of the ſecond death muſt then ceaſe.

4*thly.* The *ſmoke* of their torment is to aſcend up *for ever and ever*, and they are to be tormented day and night: But, as the ſmoke of the burning earth muſt ceaſe, when its ſubſtance is entirely diſſolved or melted, and all combuſtible bodies are conſumed; and as it is intimated in Job xxvi. 10. that day and night ſhall come to an end; and in Rev. xxi. 25, it is ſaid of the New Jeruſalem, "And the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day, for there ſhall be no night there." For all theſe reaſons, I cannot be altogether perſuaded, that their being tormented *day and night*, *for ever and ever*, during which time the ſmoke of their torment ſhall conſtantly aſcend, is quite equal to *endleſs miſery*, eſpecially as there ſhall come a time when *death* ſhall be no more, *pain* ſhall be no more, *ſorrow* ſhall be no more, *ſmoke* ſhall probably aſcend no more, and, peradventure, *night* ſhall be no more.

5*thly.* But the great reaſon of all, why I do not conceive that *for ever and ever*, doth certainly intend *endleſs duration*, is, becauſe I find the words as often uſed for *times* and *periods*, that muſt have

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an end, as you find them uſed for the miſery of the wicked. You bring three paſſages, which are all that are to be found in the whole Bible, where they are uſed in that ſenſe; I ſhall now invalidate thoſe evidences for *endleſs damnation*, by bringing an equal number of texts, where you will allow the words are uſed in a limited ſenſe.

*Friend.* Is it poſſible that you can find any ſuch paſſages in the Bible? Pray ſhew them to me.

*Miniſter.* Iſa. xxx. 8. "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, *for ever and ever.*"

See Jer. vii. 1—7. The 7th verſe is, "Then will I cauſe you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, *for ever and ever.*"

Jer. xxv. 5. "Turn ye again, now, every one from his evil way, and every one from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that JEHOVAH hath given unto you, and to your fathers, *for ever and ever.*"

Theſe paſſages are as many, and as ſtrongly expreſſed, as thoſe which you brought to prove *endleſs miſery*; and yet nothing can be more evident than that they cannot intend *endleſs duration.*—Here, theſe periods muſt be limited by the great conflagration; and thus (for ought that appears as yet) the miſery of the wicked *may* be *limited*, notwithſtanding the uſe of thoſe expreſſions, to ſet forth its dreadful continuance to unknown ages; at leaſt, thoſe words do not neceſſarily imply, that they ſhall never, as long as God lives, be delivered from their ſins and conſequent ſufferings.

If we were always to read *for ever and ever*, ENDLESS, we ſhould ſet the Scriptures at variance; and

and no criticism could ever reconcile them. Try, for instance, to reconcile Psalm cii. 25, 26, with Psalm cxlviii. 6. "Of old hast though laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.—He hath also established them *for ever and ever*; he hath made a decree which shall not pass."

Now, if the works *for ever and ever*, signify *without end*, then there is a contradiction that cannot be reconciled; but only understand them *ages of ages*, (as, indeed, they ought to be rendered) and the whole difficulty vanishes at once.

Suppose a person should read Rev. xx. 11, and xxi. 1. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea:" And should then say, These visions cannot be true, because Solomon hath said, "One generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abideth *for ever*," Eccles. i. 4. And God "laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed, *for ever*," Psal. civ. 4. The world also is established that it cannot be moved," Psal. xciii. 1. See also Psal. lxxviii. 69. and xcvi. 10. What would you think of such reasoning? Just so weak, must all the reasoning against the universal Restoration be, from the words *for ever*, and *for ever* and *ever*, being applied to states of future misery, if God has promised.

ed to put an end to them all, by reconciling all things to himſelf, deſtroying ſin, and introducing a new creation, and a ſtate of univerſal and permanent happineſs: For, if ſuch promiſes really exiſt, and their exiſtence can be demonſtrated, all reaſoning againſt them muſt be vain and futile.

*Friend.* It is certain, what when the word *for ever* is applied to things of this life and world, it intends *a period;* but when applied to ſpiritual matters, and things of another world, it muſt be *endleſs*, according to my judgment; and I am apt to think, you will find it ſo too.

*Miniſter.* I am certain that you will ſoon be convinced to the contrary. The apoſtle, ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſays, "But this man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, *for ever* ſat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth, expecting till his enemies be made his footſtool," Heb. x. 12, 13. You will pleaſe to notice, that Chriſt's ſitting down in the heavens, on the right hand of God, is not a circumſtance belonging to *this world*, or *the things of time;* and he is to ſit there *for ever;* and yet that period, which, according to your hypotheſis, muſt be *endleſs*, is expreſsly limited by the ſacred writings: The heavens have received him, "until the times (ſeaſons, or ages) of reſtitution of all things," (that is, till the beginning, and not the ending of thoſe times) which God hath ſpoken of by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began," Acts, iii. 21. And the whole New Teſtament teacheth us, to wait for the coming of Jeſus, from heaven; (1 Theſ. i. 10.) which would be highly abſurd, upon the ſuppoſition, that he is *always* to abide there:

there: Which yet he muſt, if the word *for ever*, as applied to things of *another* ſtate, intends *endleſs duration*.

*Friend.* I confeſs, I never obſerved this before: But, do you know of any paſſage in the New Teſtament, where the words, *for ever and ever*, certainly intend *limited* duration? For I obſerved, that all the inſtances you brought were from the Old Teſtament.

*Miniſter.* Yes: Heb. i. 8 But unto the Son he ſaith, "Thy throne, (in diſtinction from the throne of the Father) O God, is *for ever and ever;*" yet we read, (1 Cor. xv. 34, 28.) of the *end*, when he ſhall have "delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf, be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

*Friend.* But when Chriſt threatened ſinners, with *everlaſting* fire, *everlaſting* puniſhment, and *eternal* damnation; did not his expreſſions naturally convey the idea of *endleſs miſery?* And may not the Son of God be accuſed of duplicity and deceit, if he did not mean to denounce *puniſhment without end?* And, therefore, if we believe his words to be true, as moſt certainly they are, we muſt reject the doctrine of the reſtoration, which puts an end to a ſtate, which is called *everlaſting*, by the mouth of truth itſelf.—Are you able to anſwer this fairly?

*Miniſter.* If I am not able to anſwer this objection, which you have ſtated in the ſtrongeſt manner, I aſſure you, I will confeſs myſelf in an error; and ſhall thank you, (as an inſtrument) for bring-

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ing me to know it. The ſame objection that you make againſt the Reſtoration, the Jews make againſt *Chriſt* and *his religion*; for they argue thus: God is an unchangeable Being, and he declared, in the moſt ſolemn manner, that the ordinances of the Levitical diſpenſation ſhould be *everlaſting*, and the anointing of Aaron's ſons ſhould be an *everlaſting* prieſthood, throughout their generations; (See Exod. xl. 15. and Lev. xvi. 34) and, therefore, we muſt reject the Meſſiah of the Chriſtians, as an impoſtor; inaſmuch as he pretends to aboliſh thoſe ſtatutes, which God hath called *everlaſting*, and to ſet himſelf up as a Prieſt, contrary to the expreſs promiſe of the LORD, who cannot lie, nor repent, that Aaron and his ſons ſhould have an *everlaſting* prieſthood; and, therefore, if this is the true Meſſiah, God meant to deceive us, when he promiſed us theſe *everlaſting* bleſſings, and privileges, which, we muſt ſuppoſe were only *for a time*, if Chriſtianity be true; therefore, we reject it, as being inconſiſtent with the promiſes of God.

It is evident, from this view of the matter, that the Jews reject Chriſt and his religion, upon as good ground, as you reject the univerſal Reſtoration, and perhaps better; for you have nothing to plead againſt the Reſtoration, but ſome threatenings of puniſhments, which are called *everlaſting*, or *eternal*, in our tranſlation; but they plead expreſs promiſes of the *everlaſting* continuance of their church-ſtate and worſhip, in oppoſition to Chriſtianity. But, if it be true, that both the Hebrew and Greek words, which our tranſlators have rendered by the Engliſh word *everlaſting*, do not intend *endleſs duration*, but, a *hidden period*, or *periods*; then the ground is changed at once, and

the Jews have no right to object against Christianity, because God promised a continuance of their temple worship, for *a certain age*, or *hidden period*; nor the Christians to reject the universal Restoration, because God hath threatened the rebellious with such dreadful punishments, which shall endure through periods, expressed in the same terms. It is indeed confessed by some of the most learned Jews, that they have no word in their language, which absolutely signifies *endless duration*; and therefore, they can only argue the *endless* continuance of any thing from its nature, and not merely from the words rendered *for ever*, or *everlasting*. And, if this is the truth of the case, (as who can deny it?) then, neither did JEHOVAH speak to deceive the Children of Israel, when he promised them blessings of such long continuance, which have ended long ago, and which are never to be restored by virtue of that covenant which he made with their fathers, when he brought them out of Egypt; but by the new covenant which he *will* make with them when he shall return them to their own land; nor did the Son of God speak to deceive, when he threatened the wicked with those punishments, which shall not end *till they have answered the purposes for which it seems reasonable to believe they shall be inflicted*, viz. to bring them down and humble their proud and stubborn hearts; which shall be done, during the periods of his kingdom, before he shall have delivered it up to the Father, that God may be ALL in ALL.

*Friend.* But if I should grant that the word *aionion* doth not even in the New Testament always signify *endless duration*, yet what would you gain by it, since it is plain that Christ hath set *the happi-*

*ness*

*neſs of the righteous*, and *the miſery of the wicked*, one againſt the other; and hath expreſſed the continuance of both, by the ſame word, *aionion*, in St. Matth. xxv. 46: Here, the puniſhment of the wicked, and the life of the righteous, are both declared to be *aionion*, or *eternal*, without diſtinction: Now, can you ſhew me any paſſage of Scripture, where the ſame word is applied to two different things, whoſe exiſtence is not the ſame, or the time of their continuance not alike?

*Miniſter.* Fairly ſtated! And, if it be not as fairly anſwered, it ſhall be looked upon as an inſuperable difficulty. But, happily, there is a paſſage in Hab. iii. 6, where the ſame word is uſed for very different things; "He ſtood, and meaſured the earth: He beheld, and drove aſunder the nations; and the *everlaſting* mountains were ſcattered, the *perpetual* hills did bow: His ways are *everlaſting*." In our tranſlation, the mountains, and the ways of God, are called *everlaſting*, and the hills *perpetual*; but in the original, the word *gnad* is applied to the mountains, and the word *gnolam* to the hills, and the ways of God. But whether we argue from the original, or from the tranſlation, it makes no difference: The queſtion is, Are the mountains, or the hills, *eternal* in the ſame ſenſe in which the ways of God are? If ſo, the earth muſt have exiſted *coeval* with the ways of JEHOVAH, and the hills, and mountains, muſt never be removed, while his ways endure; and, as his ways can never be deſtroyed, the abſolute eternity not of the earth only, but of its preſent form, its mountains and hills, muſt be inferred; contrary to Iſaiah xl. 4. xliv. 10.—Ezek. xxxviii. 20.—Pet. iii. 7, 10, 11, 12.—Rev. xvi. 20. xx. 11.—

11.—Nay, even in this very text, the ways of God are ſpoken of as being of a different nature from the mountains, which were *ſcattered*, and the hills, which did *bow*.

Thus, no ſolid argument can be drawn from the application of the ſame word to *different* things, to prove that they ſhall be equal in their continuance, unleſs their nature be the ſame.

Thus in the *Greek* New Teſtament, in Rom. xvi. 25, we read of the myſtery which hath been kept ſecret, from *Chronois aioniois*, and in the 26th verſe, we find, that it is now made known by the commandment *Tou aionion Theou*. But muſt it be argued that becauſe *aioniois* is applied to times, and *aionion* to God; therefore *times* are as ancient as JEHOVAH, and muſt continue while he exiſts? The abſurdity of this is too glaring. Our tranſlators have rendered *Chronois aioniois*, "*ſince the world began*," inſtead "of *eternal times*;" and have thereby ſhewn their judgment to be, that words cannot change the ſubjects to which they are applied, but the meaning of the words muſt be determined by the nature of the ſubject.

In Jer. xxviii. 8, the word *hegnolam* is uſed in the Hebrew; but the tranſlators did not think themſelves obliged to render it "*from everlaſting*," or, "*from eternity*;" as it would have been highly abſurd to have read, *eternal* prophets, or prophets which were from *eternity*; and have therefore rendered it "*of old*," though it is a ſtronger word than *gnad*, which they have tranſlated "*eternity*," Iſa. lvii. 15.

Many other inſtances of the like nature, might be brought; but theſe are fully ſufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind, that nothing can be concluded

concluded in favor of *endleſs puniſhment*, from the word *aionion* being uſed to ſet forth the duration of it, as well as the duration of that life which our Savior promiſes to the righteous.

But upon the ſuppoſition that our Savior intends no more by the "life eternal," in the 46th verſe of the xxvth of St. Matthew's goſpel, than he doth in the 34th verſe, by "the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world," (which it would be hard to prove) then an anſwer might be given, without all this labor, in this manner, viz. that as the Father hath appointed Chriſt a kingdom, ſo he hath alſo appointed his ſaints a kingdom; (See St. Luke xxii. 29, 30. Rev. ii. 26, 27. iii. 21.) but as the kingdom which the Father hath given to Chriſt, as Mediator, and as Judge, ſhall *end*, when he ſhall have ſubdued all things, and put down all rule, and authority, and power; (See 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.) ſo, of conſequence, that kingdom which is given to the ſaints or overcomers, to ſubdue the nations, ſhall alſo *end*, when they ſhall be all ſubdued, and brought to ſubmit. But as the glory of Chriſt ſhall not be *leſſened*, but *increaſed*, when God ſhall be ALL in ALL; ſo the happineſs of the ſaints ſhall be ſo far from ending, or being *diminiſhed*, at that period, that it ſhall then arrive at the ſummit of perfection; but ſhall never cloſe nor decreaſe while JEHOVAH endures.

Some time ago, a woman came to hear me, and I happened to mention in my ſermon, that Chriſt's mediatorial kingdom was called *everlaſting*, or *aionion*; but that *it muſt come to an end*, when the kingdom ſhould be delivered up to the Father, when he ſhould have put down all rule, and all

authority and power. After sermon, she was asked how she liked? She answered, "Not at all: He saysthe *everlasting* kingdom of Christ shall end; and I never heard of such a thing before in all my life; and I am sure it must be contrary to Scripture." The person who asked her, told her, that there was such a text somewhere, she could not tell exactly where to find it. But the woman persisted in it, that there was no such text; and went away full of prejudice. Now, had this passage of Scripture been in the book of the Revelations, it would not have been so much to be wondered at, that she had never heard of it; but when we consider, that this is expressed in that part of the 15th chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which is in the *burial service*—what shall we say?

Thus, if *Christ's* kingdom *shall end*, much more *Satan's!* If *rewards*, as such, shall cease, how much more *punishments!* If the *everlasting* kingdom of the saints, which they shall possess *forever and ever*, (See Dan. vii. 18, 27.) shall end, or be swallowed up in that kingdom of boundless love, where God shall be ALL in ALL; how much more, shall all sin, pain, sorrow and death, cease and have no more a name in God's creation!

*Friend.* But supposing the doctrine of *endless misery* to be a truth, how would you expect to find it expressed in the Bible?

*Minister.* I should have a right to expect, in the first place, that there would be no promises in the Scripture to the contrary; no such passages as these: "For I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return; that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear;" Isaiah xlv. 23. Mind well,

EVERY

EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR. Swearing allegiance, as every civilian will tell you, implies *pardon*, *reception*, and *protection*, on the part of the king; and a hearty *renouncing of rebellion*, *true subjection*, and *willing obedience*, on the part of the rebels. Kings of the earth may be deceived, but God cannot; he will never accept of any feigned subjection; and, therefore, all that swear, shall swear in truth and righteousness; so shall rebellion cease, and disobedience be no more.

The apostle St. Paul, seems to quote this passage of Scripture with some variation, in his epistle to the Philippians, Chap. ii. 9, 10, 11; where, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, and the consequences of the same, he says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at (*or* in) the name of *Jesus* every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Now, this confession appears to me to imply *a willing subjection to the authority of the Savior*, brought about by the operation of the blessed Spirit; for the same apostle saith, "Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Then the argument thrown into a syllogystical form, will run thus:

If every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; then shall all rebellion cease.

But the first is true; therefore also the last. If every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

Lord, to the glory of God the Father; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; then shall the Holy Ghost work effectually in every man. As the major is proved by Phil. ii. 11, and the minor by 1 Cor. xii. 3, the conclusion must be evident to a demonstration.

*Friend.* I acknowledge, that in the present state, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost; but when they shall stand before his bar, they shall confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father, *by force.*

*Minister.* But St. Paul speaks generally, "that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost:" He does not mention *time* or *place*, but represents the matter impossible; besides every expression here used, implies *a willing*, and not *a forced subjection*; as bowing *in the name* of *Jesus*, and confessing him to be *Lord* of all, to the *glory* of *God* the *Father.*

*Friend.* But we are sometimes told, that God is as much glorified by the eternal damnation of some, as by the eternal salvation of others.

*Minister.* I have, indeed, heard some assert the same: But as the glory of God is the ultimate end of all that he doth, we may properly ask, why he should take any pains to save mankind?

But, above all, there is one objection that may be brought against this idea, which is hard to answer; and that is, God hath said, "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xviii.

xviii. 23. xxxiii. 11. It is evident to me, that God must take pleasure in what glorifies his name; and as he hath sworn that he takes no pleasure at all in the death of the wicked, it must be set down for a truth, that *punishment*, without having the reformation and subjection of rebels for its end, is unworthy of the Being we adore; and even now, it is called "*his strange work*," and "*his strange act*." But to proceed: If *endless* misery were a truth, I should not expect that the mystery of the will of God, which he hath made known unto his chosen, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, would be, "That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one (*or* rehead) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth," Ephes. i. 9, 10. Far less should I expect to find, that "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Col. i. 19, 20. And I am not able to imagine, how St. John's vision (Rev. v. 13.) could be just, if *endless damnation* is true, where he says, "And every creature who is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." In the nature of things, it appears impossible to me to believe these passages to be strictly and literally true, if *endless misery* be a truth: Therefore I say, that I should not expect any *intimations*, far less *absolute promises*, that God would destroy death, the works of the devil, and

and make all things new, with many others of the like nature.

We find it promiſed, that every knee ſhall bow; and leſt ſome might ſay, that *every* knee, meant only *ſome* knees, it is explained by the inſpired apoſtle, to mean *all* things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth; and not only ſo, but every tongue ſhall *ſwear*, and *confeſs* that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; which could not be, except all were reconciled to him, whether things in heaven, or things in earth: Wherefore, this is alſo promiſed; and, in conſequence of their being ſubdued, humbled, made obedient, and reconciled, they ſhall be *reheaded in Chriſt;* never more to go aſtray, nor break that band of eternal union, which ſhall bind all together in one body, joined to one head; and all ſhall give never ceaſing praiſe to God and the Lamb, *world without end.*

As endleſs damnation appears to me to be *againſt the promiſes*, I cannot hold it as an article of my faith; but were there no promiſes or intimations to the contrary in Scripture, I ſhould not require it to be threatened in any ſtronger terms than it is; I ſhould believe it as a truth, though I might not be able at preſent, to ſee the propriety and equity thereof; I ſhould never ſuffer my weak reaſon to gainſay Divine Revelation: But my difficulty ariſes from theſe expreſs promiſes of God, which compoſe ſo great a part of that book which is given us as a rule of faith and practice; and which promiſes expreſsly aſſert a future ſtate of things beyond ſin, ſorrow, pain, and death of every kind; when all things ſhall be made new; and death, the laſt enemy of God, Chriſt, and man, ſhall be deſtroyed, ſwallowed up in victory; and ſin, which is its ſting,

ſhall

ſhall be no more in exiſtence; and tears ſhall be all wiped away from all faces.

But, though I have acknowledged that I ſhould not dare to diſpute the doctrine of *endleſs damnation*, unleſs God had given *intimations*, and even *promiſes*, to the contrary; ſince I find ſeveral dreadful threatenings in Scripture, in which the word *aionion* or *everlaſting*, is joined with the puniſhment of the wicked; yet a very little attention will ſhew us, that the felicity of the righteous is promiſed in much ſtronger language, than the miſery of the wicked is threatened in the Scriptures.

I remark in the firſt place, that the word *aionion*, rendered *everlaſting*, or *eternal*, is uſed much oftener in St. John's goſpel alone, to expreſs the continuance of the life, or well being, of the righteous, than it is uſed in the whole Bible, to expreſs the miſery of the wicked; and this remark is ſtregthened by obſerving, that he never once uſes the word in his whole goſpel, nor in his epiſtles, to ſet forth the duration of puniſhment. See St. John, iii. 15, 16, 36. iv. 14. v. 24. vi. 27, 40, 47, 54, 68. x. 28. xii. 25. 50. xvii. ver. 2, 3, in all which paſſages, the word *aionion* is uſed to expreſs the continuance of the well being of the righteous.

But not to inſiſt on this: I obſerve, that there are many ſtronger expreſſions (even in our tranſlation) to ſet forth the well being of the righteous, than any that are uſed as connected with the miſery of the wicked. Iſaiah, xlv. 17, we read, "Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in JEHOVAH, with an *everlaſting* ſalvation; ye ſhall not be aſhamed, nor confounded, *world without end*." But where do we read, that the miſery of the wicked ſhall have *no end*? The word *endleſs*, or *world without end*, is never once

once uſed by our tranſlators, to expreſs the eternity of puniſhment, in the whole Bible.

We read, in 1 Pet. i. 4, of "an inheritance, *incorruptible*, and undefiled; and that *fadeth not away*, reſerved in heaven:" And in Chap. v. 4, of "a crown of glory, that *fadeth not away;*" and, Heb. xii. 28, of a "kingdom, which cannot be moved:" And our bleſſed Savior's words are remarkably ſtrong upon this ſubject, in many places; as, in St. Luke's goſpel, Chap. xx. 35, 36, where he ſays, "But they who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the (firſt) reſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither *can they die any more;* for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection:" And in St. John, x. 27, 28, 29, we read thus: "My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they ſhall *never periſh*, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." In Chap. xi. 25, 26, Chriſt ſays, "I am the reſurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live: And whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall *never die.*" And, in Chap. vi. 50, he ſays, "This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and *not die.*" And he expreſſes the perpetuity of the heavenly bliſs, and of our enjoyment of the ſame, by adviſing us, ſaying, "Lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven; where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor ſteal. Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleaſure

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to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth," St. Matth. vi. 20. and St. Luke, xii. 32, 33. This is that which St. Paul calleth "a better and an enduring ſubſtance," Heb. xii. 34. But what ſhall I ſay of the apoſtle's words, 2 Cor. iv. 7? 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us, *kath hyperbolen eis hyperbolen aionion baros doxes katergazetai emin:* A glory exceeding *aionion*, or eternal, *to an exceſs.*' Here is an hyperbole upon an hyperbole; beyond eternal; a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.

But it is not ſo much by the different words made uſe of to denote the permanency of the felicity of the righteous, from thoſe which are uſed to expreſs the duration of the miſery of the wicked, that I judge of the *continuance of the one* beyond the other; ſo much as from the different ſources from whence they flow, and of their different natures.

The happineſs of thoſe who are reconciled to God, ariſes from their union to Chriſt; in which if they continue grounded and ſettled during this preſent life, wherein they paſs through ſo many ſore trials, the union will become ſo permanent, as that it will be impoſſible to diſſolve it; and the very nature of things ſhews, that if we abide firm to the end, through all difficulties, and overcome all thoſe things that would ſeek to ſeparate us from Chriſt, when we come into that ſtate where we ſhall meet with no more temptations, nor any thing that hath the leaſt tendency to draw our minds from God, we muſt, of conſequence, remain attached, or united to him, while we have an exiſtence. This doctrine

was known to David; and, therefore, he ſaid, "While I live, will I praiſe JEHOVAH; I will ſing praiſes unto my God, while I have any being," Pſal. cxlvi. 2. civ. 33. It may be proved, that the union ſhall continue between Chriſt and his faithful ones after this life, and ſhall become indiſſoluble; and that neither "tribulation, nor diſtreſs, nor perſecution, nor famine, nor nakedneſs, nor peril, nor ſword; neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us (who abide in him) from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord." See Rom. viii. 35—39. See alſo St. John, xv. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10. 1 John, ii. 24—28.

The never ending continuance of the life, or ſtate of well being of the righteous, may be certainly inferred, with the greateſt eaſe, from the continuance of the life of Chriſt; who is made an high prieſt, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but aftert he power of an endleſs life," Heb. vii. 16. And he hath expreſsly declared, "Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo," St. John xiv. 19. Thus, as long as the cauſe remains, the effect muſt continue; but the cauſe, even the life of Chriſt, muſt undoubtedly continue to endleſs periods; therefore alſo, the effect, or the life of thoſe who are joined to him in an indiſſoluble union, ſhall continue. The apoſtle Paul underſtood logic as well as any in our days; and he thus reaſons upon this glorious truth; "The ſpirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirits, that we (who are led by the Spirit of God, and have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father) "are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with

with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together," Rom. viii. 16, 17.

Now, as Christ, the principal heir, cannot be disinherited; so, neither can those who are joint heirs with him. The Holy Spirit is given us as the earnest of our inheritance, and to seal us to the day of redemption, 2 Cor. v. 5. Ephes. i. 13, 14, and iv. 30. Christ is the head, and the overcomers through the blood of the Lamb, are the members of his body, and shall inherit all things; he will be their God, and they shall be his children; he is their life, and he "will make them pillars in the temple of God, and they shall go no more out," Rev. iii. 12. St. Paul says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4. And St. John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 1, 2. Thus, we are sure, from the Scriptures, and from the nature of things, that those who are drawn by the Father, united to the Son, sealed by the Holy Ghost, willingly choose the Lord for their portion, and constantly adhere to him to the end, shall never be separated from him in the future ages; for he himself saith, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," St. John, vi. 57. And as Christ is the great attracting loadstone, that shall finally draw all things to him; it is evident, that he will preserve *for ever*, those whom he hath thoroughly drawn

drawn to himſelf, and who have adhered to him through the time of trial. Thus is the life eternal of the righteous, or their endleſs ſtate of well being, expreſſed in much ſtronger language than the miſery of the wicked; and, moreover, has its foundation in the union between Chriſt and his church, and in the nature of things.

*Friend.* But if the Spirit of God dwelling in us, and thereby cauſing us to adhere to Chriſt, and to follow him through all trials, makes our union to him ſo perfect, that nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate us from him to all eternity; ſince we are confirmed in habits of goodneſs by free choice, and by oft repeated exercifes; why, by the ſame rule ſhall not the miſery of the wicked be *endleſs*, ſeeing that they have choſen and adhered to evil through life, and by conſtant practice are confirmed therein? Evil is grown up to a body in them; and it appears to me as difficult to reform and bring them off from their vicious habits, as it would be to draw the ſaints in light from their adherence to virtueand goodneſs.

*Miniſter.* Your reaſoning would be concluſive, upon the ſuppoſition that *there are two eternal principles*, viz. *good* and *evil;* if it can be proved, that evil is coexiſtent with goodneſs, that it hath always been; then, the abſolute eternity of ſin and miſery may be eaſily inferred. This is the true foundation of *endleſs miſery*, and it came from the Pagan theology: The Heathens believed in *two eternal principles*, ever warring againſt each other, and neither fully prevailing; that men had the liberty of enliſting under which they pleaſed; and that thoſe who in life choſe virtue, ſhould enjoy endleſs felicity; while, thoſe who choſe and adhered to vice, would eternally remain under its dominion, and of conſequence

conſequence be always miſerable. Thus, the infernal deities being judged by the poor Pagans to be as eternal as the good gods, and more powerful; they ſacrificed more to the evil principle than to the good, out of fear, and to appeaſe the anger of thoſe abhorred, malevolent agents; hence, the frequency of human ſacrifices.

Now, when the Chriſtian religion triumphed over Paganiſm in the Roman empire, many of the philoſophers embraced and profeſſed it, but withal, retained many of their Pagan notions; among which was the *eternity* of theſe two oppoſite principles; hence aroſe the ancient ſect of the Manichees, who believe not only the eternal exiſtence of two contrary eternal Gods, one good and the other evil; but alſo, that all viſible things were created by the devil; and upon this principle, they might argue the univerſality of damnation, with as much eaſe and certainty, as we, upon the contrary, may argue the certainty of the *Univerſal Reſtoration*, according to that glorious promiſe of God, Iſaiah, lvii. 16, 17, 18, 19, "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I always be wroth; for the Spirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth; and he went on frowardly, in the way of his heart. I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is near, ſaith JEHOVAH; and I will heal him."

Thoſe who venture to contradict their Maker, and ſay, that *he will contend for ever, and be always*

*wroth ;* ought to give as good a reaſon, at leaſt, why he *will*, as he hath given why he *will not ;* and, conſequently, muſt prove him not to be the Father of all ſpirits, and the Creator of all ſouls : If, therefore, it can be demonſtrated, that Satan is an eternal, ſelfexiſtent, immutable, evil being, and that he hath created all, or a part of mankind, (as ſome aſſerted formerly, and as I myſelf have heard lately) or that he hath drawn ſome of God's creatures into ſuch an union with himſelf, that they cannot be ſeparated from him ; and that he will maintain his crown, throne, and kingdom, in oppoſition to God, to all endleſs duration ; then, and not till then, may the *eternity* of ſin and miſery be concluded from the nature of things, with equal eaſe and certainty, as the perfection and happineſs of the ſaints.

But if the kingdom of evil, and all the works of ſin, Satan, and darkneſs, ſhall be totally deſtroyed by Chriſt, and all things ſhall be reheaded in him, who is the head of all principality and power, as well as of every man : See Epheſians, i. 10. Col. ii. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 3. If every knee ſhall bow, and tongue ſhall ſwear, and all things, whether in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, ſhall confeſs that he is Lord ; and all things, whether in heaven or in earth, ſhall be reconciled to him : See Iſaiah, xlv. 23. Phil. ii. 10, Col. i. 20. And all kingdoms (not excepting that of the prince of the power of the air) ſhall be broken and deſtroyed by the kingdom of Chriſt, which ſhall itſelf be yielded up into the kingdom of boundleſs love, where *judgment* ſhall be no more : What ſhall we ſay of that doctrine, that teaches us the *endleſs duration of evil?* So far is the *endleſs ſin* and miſery

ery of the wicked from being inferred from the *endleſs* holineſs and felicity of the righteous, in the kingdom of the Father, that every proof and demonſtration of the latter, concludes equally againſt the former.

One of the firſt arguments that ever began to take hold of my mind, and to bring me to think ſeriouſly of the ſyſtem of the Reſtoration, was, what I read in a little book upon the ſubject, called, *The Everlaſting Goſpel*, &c. and is there thus expreſſed.

"It is as impoſſible that there ſhould be two endleſs contrary things, as that there ſhould be two real contrary deities, a good God and a bad one, or two ſorts of contrary creatures, both of truly divine original, ſome being made good by God, and others bad. For an abſolute and merely infinite duration, which has neither beginning nor end, is, according to the confeſſion of all divines, yea, or every reaſonable man, a property peculiar to the uncreated Being only. But ſuch an infinite duration, which, although it has a beginning, yet ſhall have no end, can only be the property of thoſe creatures that are of divine original. For as theſe, according to the language of the ſcripture, are of divine origin, and therefore are rooted in God, or in his almighty creating power, which has no beginning, they can alſo be everlaſting, their exiſtence or duration can alſo be without end in God. But whatſoever has not its eternal root in God, or in his eternal creating power, but is ſprung up in the creature in this world, by its voluntary turning away from God, and againſt his holy will, and conſequently is an abomination and diſpleaſure to the Moſt High, and is only ſuffered by him, ſuch as ſin, and the puniſhment depending thereon, theſe things cannot poſ-

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ſibly be of an abſolute endleſs exiſtence and duration, or remain ſo long as God ſhall exiſt; but muſt of neceſſity once ceaſe and be annihilated. For as God is a Being to thoſe creatures which he created good, and which exiſt through his will, wherein they may ſubſiſt and be preſerved without end; ſo he is on the contrary, to iniquity and ſin, (which againſt his will, is ſprung up in and ſticks to the creatures) a conſuming fire, whereby all ſin and perverſeneſs in the creatures muſt be at laſt conſumed, annihilated, and ſeparated from them in the higheſt degree, in order to reſtore them to their primitive purity; in the ſame manner as the fire doth not conſume and deſtroy the gold, but only the droſs, and that which is impure."

We will now ſtate ſome of the arguments in favor of the *endleſs* continuance of the happineſs of the ſaints, in the kingdom of their Father; and thoſe which prove that the ſtate of miſery ſhall come to an end.

Chriſt hath promiſed, that the happineſs of the ſaints ſhall have no end; becauſe *his life* ſhall have no end, and he is *their life*.

The miſery of the wicked ſhall end, becauſe the kingdom of evil ſhall end.

The power of God ſtands engaged to preſerve and keep thoſe who commit themſelves to him; and thus, their union with him ſhall always continue.

The ſame is engaged to deſtroy that covenant, with death, and that agreement with hell, whereby ſinners are held in ſubjection to Satan, and thus to take the prey from the mighty, and the captives from the terrible.

The ſubjects of Chriſt are his natural ſubjects; he

he is their rightful sovereign: But Satan's subjects are slaves, led captive by him at his will; he is an usurper, and all that are in bondage to him belong to Christ, who will finally draw them all to himself.

Those that are in bliss shall be eternally attracted by him, and shall always choose that which is good; but when evil is broken, its influence shall no more prevail over those that are captivated by it; and they shall feel the consequences of sin in such a manner as to loathe it; and they shall heartily return, and swear allegiance to their rightful King.

There shall be no influence to draw the saints in bliss from Christ, and thereby dissolve his kingdom; but all the influence of God and goodness, shall tend to dissolve the kingdom of darkness, and to put an end to the thraldom and misery of its unhappy slaves.

Thus, I might go on with a long train of arguments upon this subject; but these may suffice.

*Friend.* Your arguments would seem very conclusive, for the entire subjection of all things, if you could prove that the word ALL, intends literally and mathematically, *the whole*, without *exception*; but this, I doubt, will be difficult for you to do, as you must know that it is very frequently used in common language for *a part*, and sometimes for *only a small part of mankind.*

*Minister.* I acknowledge, this is the case in common conversation, and in such parts of the sacred history where we are in no danger of being misled by it, being well informed by the context, or some other passages, or from the nature, or from the circumstances of the facts, that we must take it in a limited

limited ſenſe; but I do not recollect any paſſage, *where any point of doctrine* is ſpoken of, in which the word ALL is uſed in that *uncertain* and *undeterminate* manner; and it is neceſſary that it ſhould not be uſed in that way, *in matters of importance;* becauſe we might be led into confuſion and great uncertainty thereby; not knowing whether to underſtand it *univerſally*, or *partially*. Wherefore, I lay down this plain rule, *viz.* When the word ALL is uſed in any paſſage of Scripture, and we are not neceſſarily obliged, either by the context or ſome other text, or the nature and circumſtances of the caſe, to underſtand it *partially;* and eſpecially where any important point of doctrine is ſpoken of, we are always to underſtand it *univerſally, without exception.*

*Friend.* But can you prove from the writings of the apoſtles, that they uſed the world ALL in this large and univerſal ſenſe?

*Miniſter.* Yes, my friend, very eaſily, and in the moſt unexceptionable manner. Hear what the author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews ſays upon this Matter: "Thou haſt put ALL *things* in ſubjection under his feet; for in that he put ALL in ſubjection under him; he left *nothing that is not put under him*," Heb. ii. 8.

It is evident, that the apoſtle's reaſoning would be very inaccurate, if not entirely falſe, upon the ſuppoſition that ALL *things* did not intend ALL, in the largeſt ſenſe; for how would this concluſion naturally and neceſſarily follow, "For in that he put ALL in ſubjection under him, he left *nothing* not put under him;" unleſs it be premiſed, that ALL is uſed in the *univerſal* ſenſe of the word?

*Friend.* But hath not the ſame apoſtle made an exception;

exception, when he uſes the word ALL, in ſome other of his writings ?

*Miniſter.* Yes, truly ; but it is ſuch an exception as juſtifies this ſenſe of the word, more than a thouſand arguments : "For he hath put ALL *things* under his feet ; but when he ſaith, ALL *things* are put under him, it is manifeſt, that *he is excepted which did put* ALL *things under him.*" 1 Cor. xv. 27. Here God the Father being alone excepted, proves all other beings to be included in the words ALL *things ;* and that in ſo convincing a manner, that I am aſtoniſhed that I did not perceive it long before I did.

*Friend.* It is true, that nothing can be plainer, than that ALL *things* in theſe places, muſt mean ALL beings, except God ; but then, perhaps, St. Paul only meant, that they ſhould be ſubject *to his control,* and not brought *willingly to obey :* If you can prove this point as clearly as you have the other, and from the ſame authority, it will ſeem to put the matter with me beyond diſpute.

*Miniſter.* This is very eaſily done ; for it is univerſally acknowledged by all Chriſtians, that all things are now, and have ever been ſubject to his control ; for when he was upon earth, in his loweſt ſtate of humiliation, even the unclean ſpirits, the moſt rebellious of beings, obeyed his word ; which made thoſe who ſaw his miracles cry, with amazement, "What thing is this ? What new doctrine is this ? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they obey him," St. Mark, i. 27. The devils obeyed him univerſally in whatever he commanded them ; and could not enter into the ſwine without his permiſſion ; and how diſagreeable ſoever his words were to them, they

they were *forced* to comply, without daring to complain; yea, they frequently seemed like humble suppliants; and once we read, they went so far as to adjure our blessed Lord not to torment them: See St. Mark, v. 7. The winds, waves, fishes, all obey him; all diseases, and even death itself, heard his voice, and departed at his bidding; and to his disciples he said, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth," Matth. xxviii. 18. And certainly now, he is at "the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him," 1 Pet. iii. 22. God hath exalted him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion; and every name that is named; not only in this *age*, (for so I render the word *aioni*) but also in that which is to come; and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church," Ephes. i. 21, 22. But, as though the apostle had known that the sense would be disputed, he hath said, "But now we see *not yet all things put under him*," Heb. ii. 8. All things were subject to his control, *even on earth;* and they cannot be less so, now he is exalted to heaven, to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; and yet, many years after his ascension, the apostle says, "But now we see not *yet* all things put under him;" by which he must certainly mean their being *willingly subject* unto him; for, in all other senses, all things are *now* put under him, in the most unlimited manner, as we have seen already. But the apostle goes on to tell how far the important work is accomplished, and that a sure foundation is laid for its entire completion; saying, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for

for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for ALL;" (for so the word *pantos* ought to be rendered.) There was anciently a manuscript in use, in which the words were *choris Theou* instead of *chariti Theou*, that is, *for all*, EXCEPT GOD. And there is little doubt of its being the true sense; because St. Paul makes the same exception, with respect to those who are put under Christ, as we have before noted, 1 Cor. xv. 27.

Then the apostle adds, "For it became him, for whom are *all things*, and by whom are *all things*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," Heb. ii. 9, 10.

Instead of the word *all* intending only *a part*, we find, in several places, that the word *many* intends *all*, as in Rom. v. 15, 16, 19. "For if through the offence of one, *many* be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto *many*. The free gift is of *many* offences unto justification. For, as by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall *many* be made righteous." Isaiah liii. 11, 12. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify *many* (or *the* many) for he shall bear their iniquities. And he bare the sins of *many*, and made intercession for the transgressors." These *many* are called *all*, in the 6th verse: *All* we, like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and JEHOVAH hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*."

But, to return to our subject: St. Paul assures us, that though *all things*, without exception, are

put under him, in *one* ſenſe; yet, in *another*, he ſays, "But now we ſee not yet *all things* put under him." But he leaves us not in the dark about the matter; but ſpeaks of that effectual "working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue *all things* unto himſelf," Phil. iii. 21. And when *all things* ſhall be *ſubdued* unto himſelf, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put *all things* under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL," 1 Cor. xv. 28. Here we plainly find, a very neceſſary diſtinction between all things being *put under him*; and all things being *ſubdued unto him*, the former is already done, in the fulleſt manner; and the latter *ſhall* be as perfectly and as fully accompliſhed, in due time: "Becauſe the creation itſelf ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know, that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now," Rom. viii. 21, 22.

Though what hath already been ſpoken, may ſeem more than enough to prove the point reſpecting the word *all*; yet there is one paſſage more, full to the purpoſe, that I would not omit; it being, of itſelf, fully ſufficient to ſettle the diſpute for ever:—The apoſtle, ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſaith, "Who is the image of the inviſible God, the firſtborn of *every creature*; for by him were *all things* created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; *all things* were created by him, and for him; and he is before *all things*, and by him *all things* conſiſt. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firſt born from the dead; that in *all things*, he might have the preeminence. For it pleaſed

pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould *all* fulneſs dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his croſs, by him, to reconcile *all things* unto himſelf; by him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. i. 15—20.

As the word *all* is generally acknowledged to be uſed in its moſt extenſive ſenſe, in every place in this paragraph, except the laſt, there is no reaſon to be given why the apoſtle ſhould change the ſenſe of the word, without giving us the leaſt notice of it; and, indeed, it would be very unkind, if not unfair, for him thus to do; as it would tend to miſlead us, in a matter of very great importance.

*Friend.* I hope that I am not ſo attached to my own opinions as to be unwilling to hear and conſider what may be advanced againſt them; but the doctrine of *endleſs damnation* has been ſo generally conſidered as a moſt important article of faith by all denominations, that I can by no means think of giving it up, unleſs you are able to eſtabliſh the contrary ſyſtem upon the moſt ſolid ground, and anſwer all the ſcriptural objections fairly, that have been, or that can be brought againſt it; for I muſt have all my doubts ſolved, before I can think of believing ſuch a ſtrange doctrine as this appears to me.

*Miniſter.* I moſt heartily commend your prudence and ſincerity: I took the ſame reſolution; and would never receive this view, till I could anſwer all objections to my own ſatisfaction; and if you are diſpoſed to inquire farther at another opportunity, I ſhall be happy in giving you all the aſſiſtance in my power.

END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE.

# DIALOGUE II.

*Friend.* GOOD day to you, Sir, I was juſt paſſing by, and if you have a little time to ſpare, I ſhould be happy to have ſome farther diſcourſe with you, reſpecting your ſentiments; for although I cannot fall in with your views, yet I am convinced, that your mind is upright in the matter, and that you do not diſagree with your brethren for the ſake of differing, but for what you believe to be truth.

*Miniſter.* I have this to ſay, (and I can with truth declare it) that I never ſhould have diſſented from my brethren, had they only given me the liberty of enjoying that natural right of freely thinking for myſelf in matters religion. I ſincerely wiſh to live and die in unity with all that love God and keep his commandments; and I ſhould never have troubled the world with my ſentiments, had not great pains been taken to repreſent me as a heretic, and my ſentiments dangerous to mankind: This was done to prevent people from hearing what I had to ſay in other matters.—I was therefore, in a ſort, compelled to ſit down and anſwer all the objections that were brought againſt the truth I believed; which anſwers, drawn (as I truſt) fairly from the Scriptures, have ſatiſfied

fied many who have read what I then wrote upon the ſubject.

*Friend.* I never ſaw your anſwers to objections in print; but in our laſt converſation, you gave ſuch anſwers to many queſtions, as ſeemed to convince me that much more might be ſaid in favor of the general Reſtoration than I formerly imagined: But I have a number of objections remaining, which appear to me unanſwerable; and which I beg leave to ſtate you in the plaineſt manner.

*Miniſter.* Do, my dear friend; you will give me pleaſure by being free and open upon this ſubject; propoſe all your objections, in the ſtrongeſt manner poſſible, and I will give you ſuch anſwers as have ſatisfied me in the matter; and I beg leave to aſſure you, that no light, trifling, or forced anſwer, far leſs a manifeſt evaſion, would ſatisfy my mind upon this awful and intereſting ſubject; and if what I believe is not capable of a ſcriptural defence, I ſhall endeavor to quit the ground as ſpeedily as poſſible.

*Friend.* The words of our Savior, recorded by St. Mark, ix. 43—49, from a very ſerious, and to me an unanſwerable objection againſt the Univerſal Reſtoration.

"And if thy hand offend thee (*or* cauſe thee to offend) cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into hell; into the fire that never ſhall be quenched (*or* that is unquenchable); where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, (*or* cauſe thee to offend) cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be caſt into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched (*or* that is unquench-

able); where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, (*or* cauſe thee to offend) pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be caſt into hell fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenced. For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt."

Here our Lord repeats five times, that "the fire is not, or never ſhall be quenched, or is unquenchable;" words of nearly ſimilar meaning: Three times he ſpeaks of hell, as a *place* where "their worm dieth not;" and, to ſhew the perpetuity of the ſufferings of the miſerable, he ſays, "For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire;" *i. e.* preſerved by the fire, as ſalt preſerves meat. Theſe are the objections from this paſſage, briefly ſtated: Are you able to anſwer them fairly, without any evaſion, from the authority of Scripture?

*Miniſter.* This is certainly a moſt terrible paſſage, and deſerves to be conſidered particularly.

There is no doubt but Jeſus Chriſt had his eye upon that paſſage in Iſaiah lxvi. 24,—"And they ſhall go forth, and look upon the carcaſes of the men that have tranſgreſſed againſt me; for their worm ſhall not die, neither ſhall their fire be quenched; and they ſhall be an abhorring unto all fleſh."

It will be of uſe to us to underſtand when this prophecy ſhall be fulfilled: It ſhall be when the Children of Iſrael ſhall return, and be ſettled in their own land; and their enemies ſhall come againſt them, and ſhall be deſtroyed, and their carcaſes ſhall fall upon the mountains of Iſrael, and

and shall be a prey to the fowls of heaven, and their flesh shall be devoured by worms, which shall not die, till they have eaten and entirely destroyed their bodies.

"Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee; I will give thee to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field, to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field; for I have spoken it, saith Adonai JEHOVAH. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea; and it shall stop the noses of the passengers; and there shall they bury Gog, and all his multitude; and they shall call it, The valley of Hammon Gog. And seven months shall the House of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land." (See Ezek. xxxix. 4, 5, 11, 12.) "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the King, JEHOVAH, of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zech. xiv. 16. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith JEHOVAH." Isaiah, lxvi. 21. And they that shall come up to Jerusalem, to worship the Lord, during the time that these bodies shall lie in the open field, shall go forth, and behold them in a state of putrefaction, a prey to worms; and all the nations of the earth shall see God's judgments executed upon those who dare to rebel against him, by making war against the Lamb, and against his army. Rev. xvii. 14. xix. 19.

It

It is alſo intimated by Ezekiel, that a fire ſhall be kindled, to burn their weapons of war, &c. which ſhall laſt for ſome time. Hear his words: "And they that dwell in the cities of Iſrael ſhall go forth, and ſhall ſet on fire and burn the weapons, both the ſhields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handſtaves and the ſpears; and they ſhall burn them with fire ſeven years; ſo that they ſhall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the foreſts; for they ſhall burn the weapons with fire." See Ezek. xxxix. 9, 10.

Thus have I endeavored to give the plain ſenſe of the text to which our Lord alluded; and I have not the ſmalleſt doubt of its being hereafter literally fulfilled.

I will now endeavor to give what appears to me the meaning of the text before us:—Chriſt threatened that thoſe who would not deny themſelves, and cut off thoſe things that led them into ſin, ſhould hereafter ſuffer infinitely greater inconveniences, by being caſt into hell fire. And, Oh! who can conceive how dreadful a portion is threatened to ſome tranſgreſſors! that they "ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb: And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up ages of ages; and they have no reſt, day nor night." Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

Thus, as the enemies of God, who ſhall be deſtroyed near Jeruſalem, ſhall have their carcaſes expoſed, full of worms, and be an abhorring unto all

all that behold them; ſo thoſe who are caſt into the burning lake, ſhall be publicly expoſed to ſhame, and ſhall ſuffer openly for their crimes; and the ſmoke of their torment ſhall aſcend up *continually*, during thoſe ages that the lake of fire, or the ſecond death, ſhall continue.

But when I conſider that this terraqueous globe itſelf is probably to become the lake of fire, when the elements ſhell melt with fervent heat; and yet after that dreadful ſcene is paſt, the earth itſelf ſhall be renewed, and become the habitation of righteouſneſs; I can hardly have any doubts, but all the rational part of the creation, "ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the "children of God." See Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Thus, if the lake of fire, or ſecond death itſelf, ſhall be deſtroyed, ſhall ceaſe, and be no more; there is an *end* to *tormenting pain*; though, perhaps, ſuch *inward reflections*, ſhall continue for ſome time longer, (if not to eternity) which, though they ſhall tend exceedingly to increaſe the love of God in the ſouls thus delivered, ſhall fill them with ſhame ſimilar, or perhaps more pungent than we feel here on earth, when we are melted under a deep ſenſe of our manifold tranſgreſſions, and of the pardoning love of God at the ſame time.—This ſeems to me to be the meaning of ſuch paſſages as theſe:

"O my God, make them like a wheel; as the ſtubble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame ſetteth the mountains on fire; ſo perſecute them with thy tempeſt, and make them afraid with thy ſtorm. Fill their faces with ſhame, that they may ſeek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea,

yea, let them be put to ſhame, and periſh : That—(our tranſlators have added the word *men*, but the ſenſe determines that the addition ſhould be)—"*they* may know that thou whoſe name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Moſt High over all the earth, Pſal. lxxxiii. 13—18.

"The wiſe ſhall inherit glory, but ſhame ſhall be the promotion of fools," Prov. iii. 35.

"They ſhall be greatly aſhamed, for they ſhall not proſper; their everlaſting confuſion ſhall never be forgotten," Jer. xx. 11. xxxiii. 40.

"They ſhall be aſhamed, and alſo confounded, all of them; they ſhall go to confuſion together, that are makers of idols," Iſa. xlv. 16. "And all are incenſed againſt him, (JEHOVAH) ſhall be aſhamed," verſe 24.

"For thus ſaith Adonia JEHOVAH; I will even deal with thee as thou haſt done, which haſt deſpiſed the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheleſs, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting covenant. Then thou ſhalt remember thy ways, and be aſhamed, when thou ſhalt receive thy ſiſters, thine elder and thy younger (*viz.* Samaria and Sodom); and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will eſtabliſh my covenant with thee, and thou ſhalt know that I am JEHOVAH: That thou mayeſt remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou haſt done, ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH," Ezek. xvi. 59—63.

"Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall loathe

loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith Adonai JEHOVAH, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded, O house of Israel," Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 32.

But the lake of fire shall go out, when all the purposes for which it shall be kindled are accomplished; and if so, then it follows of course, that intelligences shall be no longer tormented therein.

*Friend.* But when God says, that a fire shall not be quenched, does it not necessarily imply, that it shall never cease burning?

*Minister.* By no means; for we read in several places of Scripture of fires that have ceased, ages ago, that were spoken of in as strong terms as are used by Christ, respecting the fire of hell.

As for instance: In Lev. vi. 13. we read, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall *never* go out." This is a much stronger expression than if it had been said, "It shall not be quenched;" for it is said, "*It shall never go out:*" But surely, it must be used with some limitation; for we know that it hath ceased, ages ago: And we read, that Daniel propheſied of the Messiah, that he should "cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease," Dan. ix. 27; but it would certainly have been a weak argument against Daniel's prophecy, that as Moses had said, The fire should never go out upon the altar, therefore the Messiah could never cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; but it would be just as good an argument against Daniel's prophecy, as the words of Christ are against Isaiah's: "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have sworn by myself, the

the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, That unto me every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear. Surely ſhall ſay, In JEHOVAH have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength; to him ſhall men come; and all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed," Iſa. lvii. 16. xlv. 23, 24.

In Jer. xvii. 27. we read: "But if you will not hearken unto me, &c. then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it ſhall devour the palaces of Jeruſalem, and *it ſhall not be quenched.*" See alſo chap. iv. 4, xxi. 12. Amos v. 6. 2 Kings xxii. 17.

Similar threatenings we find poſitively pronounced by Ezekiel, at the command of God: "Moreover the word of JEHOVAH came unto me ſaying, Son of man, ſet thy face towards the ſouth, and drop thy words towards the ſouth, and propheſy againſt the foreſt of the ſouth field, and ſay to the foreſt of the ſouth, Hear the word of JEHOVAH; Thus ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH, Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it ſhall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame ſhall not be quenched, and all faces from the ſouth to the north, ſhall be burnt therein; and all fleſh ſhall ſee that I JEHOVAH have kindled it; *it ſhall not be quenched,*" Ezek. xx. 45, 46, 47, 48. See alſo Jer. vii. 20.

Now theſe threatenings were ſurely executed; for the people did not hearken to God; he did certainly kindle a fire, and it burnt, and was not quenched, but conſumed Jeruſalem and all her palaces; and the beautiful foreſts that were ſo much eſteemed, ſhared the ſame fate: But what perſon will argue, that the whole city and country muſt be now in flames; and muſt have been conſuming,

ſuming, from the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, becauſe of theſe expreſſions, "The flaming flame ſhall not be quenched," &c. ſince we know that Jeruſalem, and the country round about, have been ſince inhabited, and will be again, in a more glorious manner than ever?

Neither will it help the matter to ſay, that we muſt underſtand the fire *figuratively*, for the anger of God, &c. for he declares by Zechariah, after the ſeventy years captivity, that he was "returned to Jeruſalem *with mercies*." See Zech. i. 16. And though the preſent deſolation of that land is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, Deut. xxix. 23—28. And Ezekiel not only ſpeaks of it as deſolate and waſte, but as having been always ſo; though we know it was formerly filled with inhabitants: (See Ezek. xxxvi. 34, 35, xxxviii. 8.) Yet all the prophets ſpeak of a time to come, when it ſhall be much more flouriſhing than it hath ever been; and Iſaiah ſays, "Whereas thou haſt been forſaken and hated, ſo that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou ſhalt no more be termed Forſaken; neither ſhall thy land be termed Deſolate; but thou ſhalt be called Hephzibah *(my delight is in her)* and thy land Bulah *(married)*; for JEHOVAH delighteth in thee, and thy land ſhall be married," Iſaiah lx. 15. lxii. 4.

Thus we may ſee, by theſe and many other paſſages, that predictions apparently directly contrary one to the other, may be all fulfilled upon the ſame land, people and perſons; only allowing a proper time to each, without which we can never make ſenſe of many prophecies.

Iſaiah, ſpeaking of the land of Bozrah, ſays, "And the ſtreams thereof ſhall be turned into pitch, and the duſt thereof into brimſtone; and the land thereof ſhall become burning pitch. It ſhall not be quenched, night nor day; the ſmoke thereof ſhall go up for ever; from generation to generation it ſhall lie waſte; none ſhall paſs through it, for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern ſhall poſſeſs it; the owl alſo, and the raven, ſhall dwell in it;" (birds that cannot live in fire, pitch, and brimſtone, any better than men.) "And thorns ſhall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortreſſes thereof; and it ſhall be an habitation for dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beaſts of the deſart ſhall alſo meet with the wild beaſts of the iſland, and the ſatyr ſhall cry to his fellow; the ſcreechowl alſo ſhall reſt there, and find for herſelf a place of reſt. There ſhall the great owl make her neſt, and lay and hatch, and gather under her ſhadow; there ſhall the vultures alſo be gathered, every one with his mate. Seek ye out of the book of JEHOVAH, and read; no one of theſe ſhall fail, none ſhall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath caſt the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line; they ſhall poſſeſs it for ever, from generation to generation ſhall they dwell therein," Iſaiah xxxiv. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Now, in this paſſage, there are ſuch things ſpoken of as are impoſſible to be fulfilled at once, without as great a miracle as was wrought for the three children in the furnace; and which there is no reaſon to expect will be wrought in favor of cormo-

cormorants, bitterns, owls, ravens, dragons, ſatyrs, wild beaſts, thorns, nettles and brambles. In the 10th verſe we read of a period, called *for ever*, wherein this land is to be on fire and is not to be quenched, night nor day; and the ſmoke of it is to aſcend up *for ever;* but in the 17th verſe, it is ſaid, that the beforementioned birds and beaſts ſhall poſſeſs it *for ever*, even from generation to generation ſhall they dwell therein. But one of theſe periods muſt end, before the other can begin; the fire muſt ceaſe to burn, and the ſmoke to aſcend, before beaſts can take up their conſtant dwelling there, and birds can lay and hatch, and gather their young ones under their ſhadow, and enjoy the ſociety of their mates. And thus the whole prophecy may be fulfilled; not in the *ſame*, but in *different* periods: And thus alſo, may all the threatenings, and all the promiſes, in the ſacred book, be accompliſhed; not at once, but each in their ſeaſon.

It appears evident, that our Lord, by alluding to a fire that ſhall burn on earth, and to worms that ſhall devour the fleſh of the ſlain, could not mean to prove the torments of men to be abſolutely *endleſs;* at leaſt, the expreſſions of *the worm* that *dieth not*, and *the fire* that *is not quenched*, do not *neceſſarily* imply it; which has been ſufficiently proved, by the paſſages where the ſame or ſimilar expreſſions are uſed, where yet the ſubject cannot intend *endleſs* duration; and this is all that can be neceſſary to prove at preſent.

As to the expreſſion of being *ſalted with fire*, as *every ſacrifice was ſalted with ſalt;* I am not ſo clear, what might have been our Savior's intent in this expreſſion; but I think, in the firſt place, he intended

tended to teach us, that they ſhould not be *annihilated* by the fire, but *preſerved* therein, to be tormented day and night, in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb, during the ages of ages. I would alſo propoſe, whether our Lord did not mean to intimate, that even the fire itſelf ſhall be of uſe under his direction, to humble, ſubdue, and penetrate the ſtubborn and diſobedient rebels, that ſhall be caſt into it. *Fire*, as well as *ſalt*, is a great purifier; and preſerves and cleanſes thoſe things which are able to endure it; and is the great agent by which all metals are ſeparated from their droſs, and prepared for the uſe for which they were deſigned. Under the law, all unclean things, that could endure the fire, were ordered to be caſt into it, in order to their cleanſing.

*Friend.* What you have ſaid concerning the fires that are repreſented as unquenchable, in ſeveral paſſages of Scripture, is worthy of attention; but you ſhould conſider, that theſe fires were all on earth, and in time, and therefore muſt have an end, or ceaſe to burn; but the fire of hell is in eternity, and therefore muſt laſt as long as eternity ſhall endure. Pray, what can you ſay to this?

*Miniſter.* Had thoſe *unquenchable* fires never gone out while earth endured, or while time laſted, there might have been ſome force in this argument; but ſince the continuance of the fire does not depend upon the *ſeaſon* in which it is kindled, but upon the *combuſtables* that feed and ſupport it, this can be no objection: Therefore, ſince thoſe unquenchable fires that have been mentioned, were kindled on earth, and yet not burn while earth laſted, but have gone out long ago; there is no neceſſity of granting,

granting, (even though we ſhould admit your premiſes of the fire of hell being kindled in eternity) that the unquenchable fire of the burning lake *muſt* unavoidably burn to *all eternity*, merely becauſe it is ſuppoſed to belong to that ſtate: But if puniſhments only belong to thoſe ages of ages before Chriſt ſhall reſign the kingdom to the Father, and the lake of fire ſhall be this terraqueous globe, diſſolved, or melted, with fervent heat; then the ground is changed, and the whole objection vaniſhes of courſe.

*Friend.* As you have come over this objection better than I expected you could, I ſhall leave it for the preſent, and conſider more fully, when I am by myſelf, what you have ſaid upon this ſubject; and ſhall now propoſe the greateſt objection that can be brought againſt the Reſtoration of all men, from the Scriptures; and which, if you can fairly anſwer, I ſhall be almoſt perſuaded to believe with you; but I am perſuaded that you will be hard put to it.

*Miniſter.* Produce your cauſe, and bring forth your ſtrong reaſons, that we may hear them; and if I am ſilenced, I will not be aſhamed to acknowledge it with all my heart.

*Friend.* I ſhall bring my objection from the Scriptures, and ſtate it with the utmoſt preciſion that I am able:—It is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, of which our Savior ſpeaks in the moſt awful manner; ſaying, "Wherefore I ſay unto you, all manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men; but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men. And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall (*or* may) be forgiven him; but whoſoever ſpeaketh

againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world *(or* age) neither in the world *(or* age) to come. Verily, I ſay unto you, all ſins ſhall *(or* may) be forgiven unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme ; but he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath never forgiveneſs, *(or* hath not forgiveneſs to the age) but is in danger of eternal damnation," St. Matth. xii. 31, 32. St. Mark, iii. 28, 29. This is ſuch a matter of importance, that three of the evangeliſts notice it. St. Luke hath it thus : " And whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall *(or* may) be forgiven him ; but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven," St. Luke, xii. 10. St. Matthew ſaith, this ſin ſhall not be forgiven in this world, nor in that to come ; St. Mark, that ſuch an one hath never forgiveneſs, but is in danger of eternal damnation ; and St. Luke poſitively ſaith, it ſhall not be forgiven : And, to confirm the matter ſtill more, if poſſible, St. Paul ſaith, " For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, and have taſted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ; if they ſhall fall away, *(or*, and have fallen away) to renew them again to repentance ; ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame. For if we ſin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries. He that deſpiſed Moſes's law, died without

out mercy, by the mouth of two or three witneſſes: Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe, ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the ſon of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace?" Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, x. 26, 27, 28, 29. And the ſame Apoſtle directs us, ſaying; "Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of the grace of God; leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: Leſt there be any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it with tears." Heb. xii. 15, 16, 17.

And St. John, the beloved diſciple, ſays; "If any man ſee his brother ſin a ſin which is not unto death, he ſhall aſk, and he ſhall give him life for them that ſin not unto death. There is a ſin unto death: I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it," 1 John v. 16.

Now here is a ſin for which there is no forgiveneſs, neither in this world *(or* age) or in that to come; which ſhall not be forgiven at all; he that committeth it hath never forgiveneſs, is in danger of eternal damnation; he cannot be renewed again to repentance, becauſe he hath crucified Chriſt to himſelf afreſh, and hath put him to an open ſhame; having ſinned wilfully and maliciouſly, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, to ſuch no more ſacrifice for ſins remaineth; judgment and fiery indignation are his certain portion, he is an adverſary,

ſary, and muſt be devoured; a ſorer puniſhment than death without mercy awaits him, of which he is worthy, for that he hath trodden under foot the Son of God, the only Savior, and hath counted the precious blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, and which alone is able to cleanſe from ſin, an unholy thing; and hath done deſpite to the Spirit of grace, which is only able to renew the heart, and therefore the caſe of ſuch muſt be deſperate; for if ſuch an one, like Eſau, ſhould wiſh to repent and gain what he had loſt, it could not be, for he would find no place for repentance, though he might ſeek it carefully with tears; for having committed the ſin unto death, for which no prayer is to be made, no interceſſion offered up, he is bound over to the ſecond death, the lake of fire and brimſtone, and muſt bear the puniſhment of his ſins for ever and ever!!!—What ſay you to this?

*Miniſter.* As when Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel his dream, he was aſtoniſhed for one hour at the greatneſs of the puniſhment which he ſaw would inevitably come upon the King; much more muſt all thoſe be, who read and conſider theſe dreadful threatenings, which muſt ſurely come upon all thoſe who have ſinned in the manner deſcribed! I ſhall make a few obſervations upon theſe moſt terrible paſſages of Scripture; partly to prevent feeble minds from falling into deſpair, that may ſee them collected in one ſtriking view; partly to cure proud minds of preſumption; and partly to ſhew that the doctrine of the Reſtoration may be defended, notwithſtanding.

1. We are ſure that the Scribes and Phariſees of our Savior's time, who blaſphemouſly aſcribed his

his miracles to the power of the devil, did, in the moſt direct and undeniable manner, commit that ſin; and ſome are doubtful whether it can be committed by any in theſe days.

2. It is generally acknowledged, that the Hebrews were in danger of committing that ſin, by openly and wilfully apoſtatizing from Chriſtianity, and publicly renouncing Chriſt and his ſalvation, and blaſpheming againſt the Holy Ghoſt, after having been partakers of its extraordinary gifts.

3. It cannot be committed by ignorant perſons, nor without a conſiderable degree of malice prepenſe; light in the underſtanding, and malice in the heart, are neceſſary ingredients of this dreadful crime; and it appears to me, it muſt be committed openly, and that it cannot be committed in thought only.

4. Under the Levitical diſpenſation there were many unpardonable ſins—crimes that could not be forgiven or overlooked, and for which no atonement could be made, and which were puniſhed with death, without mercy; other crimes, unleſs ſacrifices were offered, and repentance took place, ſubjected the parties to death alſo; but, under the goſpel, there is but one crime that is properly unpardonable, and that abſolutely ſubjects the perſon guilty of it to the ſecond death; yet many other ſins are threatened with the ſame puniſhment conditionally, but they may be forgiven, and not puniſhed at all; but this one muſt as certainly be puniſhed with the ſecond death, as murder or any other crime, was by the law of Moſes puniſhed with the death of the body without mercy of forgiveneſs. *Forgery* is the unpardonable ſin of England; people frequently ſuffer death for other crimes,

crimes, as well as this; but other offences are ſometimes forgiven, but this never; it is always puniſhed with death. This circumſtance may illuſtrate my meaning. The ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is an offence of that kind, that, either owing to its uncommon malignity (as is moſt likely) or ſome other cauſe, expoſes the guilty perſon to the age of judgment, from which he cannot eſcape by repentance, pardon, and ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt, as other ſinners may; neither can he be at preſent born of the Spirit, to which he hath done deſpite; nor can he be reclaimed by any poſſible means, in this age, or in the age that is to ſucceed this, but is inevitably bound over to ſuffer the inconceivable torments of the ſecond death, or lake of fire and brimſtone after the day of judgment.

5. There is no kind of diſpute between us, reſpecting the certainty of the puniſhment of ſuch; in this we both agree: He that ſinneth againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is in danger of eternal damnation, or judgment, or the ſecond death:—The queſtion is, Shall there ever come a time, when the ſecond death, or lake of fire, ſhall no more exiſt? If this can be proved, the concluſion will be evident, *viz.* that not one ſhall remain under the power thereof to all eternity: Upon this, and this alone, depends the ſolution of this awful, intereſting, and moſt important queſtion; and I conſider all other anſwers as mere quibbles, compared with this. And if it cannot be proved that a time will come, when all that bears the name of death ſhall be deſtroyed, thoſe who commit the ſin unto death, muſt, at leaſt, be allowed to ſtand as exceptions to the general rule; and, I am apt to think, the rule itſelf will

be

be overthrown. I ſhall therefore labor this point a little; and if I ſhould be ſo happy as to prove to your ſatisfaction the total deſtruction of death, it will anſwer many other objections as well as this. My only refuge is Scripture; if that fails me, I ſhall not preſume to purſue the ſubject farther.

Iſa. xxv. 8. "He will ſwallow up *Death* in victory; and Adonai JEHOVAH will wipe away tears from off all faces." Hoſ. xiii. 14. "I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death, O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, *(or* hell) I will be thy deſtruction: Repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes." 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is *Death*"—or rather, as the words may more properly be arranged, "*Death*," the laſt enemy, ſhall be deſtroyed." The ſecond death is infinitely more the enemy of man than the firſt, and may therefore be conſidered as an enemy which God will deſtroy.—Now,

If the laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, there will not be one left.

But the firſt is true; therefore alſo the laſt. As,

Would it not be highly abſurd to ſay, that, Although the very laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, yet, many millions ſhall remain to all eternity?

Verſe 56. "The ſting of *Death* is ſin." While ſin remains in exiſtence, death will be able to ſhew its ſting; but the time will come when death ſhall have no ſting to boaſt of; therefore ſin, and conſequently death of every kind, ſhall be deſtroyed. 1 John iii. 8. "For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil." Unleſs Chriſt finally deſtroys the works

works of the devil, even all ſin out of the univerſe, his purpoſe muſt be eternally fruſtrated :

But the laſt can never be ; therefore the firſt is true.

Heb. ii. 14. "Foraſmuch, then, as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame ; that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."—Now what death has the devil power over ? The death of the body ? Or that of the ſoul, which conſiſts in enmity againſt God, and ſeparation from him ? "To be carnally minded is death ; but to be ſpiritually minded is life and peace. Becauſe the carnal mind is enmity againſt God ; for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 6, 7. If this death, with the conſequence of it, is that which the devil hath the power of, then muſt this death be deſtroyed.

But, I think, the firſt is true ; therefore alſo the laſt.

Rev. xxi. 4, we read, "And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there ſhall be no more *Death*, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain ; for the former things are paſſed away." Here is a ſtate ſpoken of beyond all death ; a ſtate wherein, ſorrow, crying, and pain ſhall be no more. This ſtate is cotemporary with the new heaven and earth, after the lake of fire hath ceaſed.

*Friend.* We have always underſtood this paſſage to relate to the death of the body, and even to the death of the righteous only ; but making this ſtate cotemporary with the new heavens and earth, ſeems to throw a new light upon the ſubject.

*Miniſter.*

*Miniſter.* Moſt certainly the word *Death* here implies the ſecond death; for we are informed, in the foregoing chapter, of the firſt reſurrection, even that of the martyrs, who were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God; and ſuch as had not worſhipped the beaſt and his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands; then we read of a thouſand years between this reſurrection, and the reſt of the dead living again; after this, we find, that the dead, ſmall and great, ſtood before God, and were judged; and ſuch as were not found written in the book of life, were caſt into the lake of fire, which is expreſsly called "the ſecond death;" which as before obſerved, is probably the earth in its melted ſtate. In this chapter we find, that all things are to be made new; and *Death* is to be no more, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain. But this muſt be the ſecond death, or lake of fire; for the reſurrection of all the bodies, both of the juſt and unjuſt, had been ſpoken of before.

Thus, as all ſin, and all that bears the name of death, ſhall be entirely deſtroyed at laſt; the doctrine of endleſs miſery ſeems to fall to the ground, or, at leaſt, cannot be certainly proved from Scripture, but rather the contrary.

The time muſt come when all things ſhall be ſubject to Chriſt, when he ſhall deſtroy death, the laſt enemy, by deſtroying ſin, which is the ſting of death; ſo this dreadful ſin, as well as others, ſhall be no more. For if this was not to be the caſe, it never could be true, that "where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound;" for it never would abound quite ſo much; neither would death and

hell be silent when God shall ask the great questions, "O death where is thy sting? O grave *(or* hell) where is thy victory?" for death could say, Here is my sting, that sin against the Holy Ghost, which must endure to all eternity, and which even divine grace shall never destroy; I have, therefore, the victory and dominion over these sinners who have committed it, and will hold it while God himself exists. Then death could never be destroyed, nor swallowed up in victory; neither would sorrow, crying, and pain cease; neither could God ever be ALL IN ALL, in any other sense, with respect to them, than he is now; nor would *every tongue swear;* neither would all things wholly be made new, nor all the former things ever pass away! Neither could the universal chorus of praise ever be sung by every creature, in heaven, or earth, and under the earth, and throughout God's wide domain; and, finally, many Scriptures would never seem to be fulfilled, in the fullest sense. Rom. v. 20, 21. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death; even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, if grace shall abound more than sin, it shall be as universal, and more powerful: But the first is true; therefore also the last. If grace shall be as extensive as sin, and more powerful, all who have sinned shall be restored: But the first is true; therefore also the last.

What consequences must follow from the supposition, that some of God's creatures shall always remain his enemies! Either God created some to be miserable to endless ages, or must be frustrated eternally

eternally in his designs, or all must be restored at last, and made happy by love and free love.

The first is blasphemous, the second is dishonorable to God; therefore, the third must be true: For I cannot think of a fourth conclusion.

*Friend.* What do you think of the deplorable case of Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright; and afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears?"

*Minister.* He certainly lost, or rather sold, his birthright; in consequence of which, he lost the blessing belonging to the firstborn: But lest any should be led to conclude from this, that poor *Esau* had no blessings at all, the same apostle informs us, that, "By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come," Heb. xi. 20. By this we find, he was blessed, as well as Jacob; but in a less degree.

*Friend.* Do we not read, "Jacob have I loved; but Esau have I hated?" Rom. ix. 13. Mal. i. 2, 3.

*Minister.* Yes, most certainly: But then this love and hatred, so called, was manifested to their posterity, and not to their persons, in the manner described by the prophet: "I have loved you, saith JEHOVAH; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith JEHOVAH; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness." This manifestation of hatred did not affect the eternal state of their souls, but their condition in this world: God declared, that Jacob's seed should exist as a distinct people to the end

end of time, but that Esau's should not; and this difference is evident; for the remains of Esau's seed were, in the days of the Maccabees, incorporated with the seed of Jacob, and existed no more for ever, as a nation by themselves. From Jacob's race the Messiah was to come, and all nations were to be blessed in the seed of Israel. In all these instances, and in many others, there was a manifest preference of Jacob to Esau; but nothing like positive hatred can be intended.

Christ says, (St. Luke, xiv. 26.) "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." But we cannot suppose our Lord intended positive, but comparative hatred; according to St. Matth. x. 37. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.

*Friend.* What you have said upon this subject appears to have some weight, and I will consider it more fully hereafter; but I must beg leave to ask you, how you get over that great gulph which is placed between the regions of *Paradise* and *Gehenna*, of which Abraham speaks to the rich man; saying, And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Does not this imply the absolute impossibility of the rich man's being ever restored?

*Minister.* You have asked me many questions; give me leave to ask you one.—Do you believe, that

that Jesus of Nazareth was able to pass that impassable gulph?

*Friend.* Indeed, that is a question I never heard proposed before; and which I am not prepared to answer, without farther consideration. Pray, be so kind as to give an answer yourself, and tell me what you think of it.

*Minister.* I believe, that with *man* it is impossible; but with GOD all things are possible: And I believe, that Jesus Christ was not only able to pass, but that he actually did pass that gulph, which was impassable to all *men*, but not to him: And he assures St. John, that he had passed it, and not only so, but that he had the keys of the same in his possession; for he saith, "Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." And St. Peter informs us, that "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us unto God); being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; who sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing:" And he also tells us, that we "shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead," (in distinction from them that are quick) "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." See Rev. i. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. iv. 5, 6.

*Friend.* You know, the common opinion is, that the Spirit of God, in Noah, preached unto the in-

habitants of the old world; who, in St. Peter's time, were ſhut up in the priſon of hell: But I muſt confeſs, it appears to me a very dark text.

*Miniſter.* If you only obſerve how particular the expreſſions are in theſe texts, I think it will ſoon appear that not the Spirit of God in Noah, but the ſpirit, or ſoul, of Chriſt in its diſembodied ſtate, is here intended. His body was doubtleſs quickened, by his ſoul, or ſpirit coming into it again: Was it not?

*Friend.* It ſeems moſt reaſonable to believe it was.

*Miniſter.* Then obſerve the next words, *he went;* here the idea of a journey to a diſtant place is intimated, the original word being expreſſive of an actual paſſage from one place to an another, and is the ſame that is uſed in ver. 22, for the aſcenſion of Chriſt into heaven, ſo that he appears to have gone into the priſon in the ſame proper ſenſe, as he afterwards went into heaven. He actually journeyed to the place of confinement, *and preached to the ſpirits*, &c. He preached *the goſpel* no doubt, not to men in the body, but to *the ſpirits*, to thoſe in a diſembodied ſtate; not only ſo, but to *the ſpirits in priſon:* Had they not been in the priſon, Chriſt would not have gone into the priſon to preach to them. But, who were theſe ſpirits? St. Peter informs us, that they are thoſe who were *ſometime diſobedient;* but this expreſſion intimates, that the time is perfectly paſt; as, "Ye *were* the ſervants of ſin; for when ye *were* the ſervants of ſin, ye *were* free from righteouſneſs," Rom. vi. 17, 20. St. Peter tells us when they were diſobedient; *when once the longſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing:*

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Here he evidently distinguishes the two periods of their visitation; one is called the preaching of Christ, by his spirit, after he was put to death in the flesh; and the other is called the longsuffering of God, which waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing. The longsuffering of God waited upon them, before they were drowned, while the ark was building; but Christ preached to them when they were spirits in prison. They were disobedient to God's longsuffering; but it is not certain that they were so when Christ preached to them; but the contrary is intimated in these words: "*For, this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead,*" &c. This cannot intend those that are *spiritually* dead only, but those whose bodies are dead; because we here find *the dead* set in opposition to *the quick*, or those whose bodies are alive, and not those that are *spiritually alive;* for we may observe, that whenever the words *quick* and *dead* occur, by *quick*, we always understand those whose bodies are alive; and by *dead*, those who have ceased to exist here.

Acts, x. 40, &c. St. Peter, in his sermon to Cornelius and his family, informed them of Jesus, who was slain, whom "God raised from the dead, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before of God; even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he, who was ordained of God to be the judge of *quick* and *dead.*" And St. Paul says to Timothy, I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the *quick* and the *dead* at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach

preach the word," &c. See 2 Tim. iv. 1. So, in 1 Pet. iv. 5, the words *quick* and *dead* are uſed in the ſame manner; and then immediately, while the idea is warm in our minds, the apoſtle gives us the reaſons why the goſpel was preached to *the dead*, (*or* the ſpirits in priſon) of which he had before informed us, and now repeats again, and aſſures us, that it was, *that they might be judged according to men, in the fleſh*; or, as though they had heard it while they were alive in the fleſh; but alſo, that they might *live according to God, in the ſpirit*. The goſpel not only *was*, but *is*, preached to them that are dead, in a *moral* or *ſpiritual* ſenſe. It need not have been ſaid; *For, for this cauſe was the goſpel preached* ALSO *to them that are dead*, if only the ſpiritually dead are intended; for it is rarely preached to any other but ſuch. Why ſhould it be ſaid, *that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh*, if they were men in the fleſh at the time when it was preached to them?

This paſſage proves the exiſtence of the ſouls after the death of the body; for unleſs the ſouls of the antediluvians exiſted after the drowning of their bodies, Chriſt could not have preached to them in priſon: But the *dead* being oppoſed to the *quick* in this paſſage, ſufficiently, and even inconteſtibly, determines the ſenſe.

With a little attention, we may eaſily be convinced, that Chriſt was not only deſigned to be a Covenant of the people, (meaning the Jews) and a Light to the Gentiles; which two deſcriptions, comprehend all the living; but alſo, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon houſe; which (if it be:

be not a repetition) muſt intend the *dead*, as all the *living* were mentioned before.

"And he ſaid, It is a light thing that thou ſhouldeſt be my ſervant, to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation unto the ends of the earth. Thus ſaith JEHOVAH, In an acceptable time have I heard thee and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee; and I will preſerve thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, to eſtabliſh the earth, to cauſe to inherit the deſolate heritages." Thus far the Redeemer's work ſeems limited to the earth, and reſpects the living: But the prophet goes much farther, and ſays, "That thou mayeſt ſay to the priſoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves; they ſhall feed in the ways, and their paſtures ſhall be in all high places. They ſhall not hunger, nor thirſt; neither ſhall the heat nor ſun ſmite them; for he that hath mercy upon them ſhall lead them, even by the ſprings of water ſhall he guide them." See Iſaiah, xlii. 6, 7. xlix. 6, 8, 9, 10. Compared with Rev. vii. 14, 15, 16, 17. The word of the Savior, as deſcribed by the elegant pen of Iſaiah, (chap. lxi. 1, 2, 3) ſeems to comprehend a great variety of particulars; all which he hath performed already, or ſhall execute in due time. "The Spirit of Adonai JEHOVAH is upon me; becauſe JEHOVAH hath anointed me, (1) to preach good tidings to the meek: (2) He hath ſent me to bind up the broken hearted; (3) to proclaim liberty to the captives, (4) and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound: (5) To proclaim the acceptable year of JEHOVAH, (6) and the day

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of vengeance of our God : (7) To comfort all that mourn : (8) To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them, *Firſt*, beauty of aſhes ; *Secondly*, the oil of joy for mourning ; *Thirdly*, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs ; that they might be called, *Firſt*, Trees of righteouſneſs ; *Secondly*, The planting of JEHOVAH ; *(and* ALL *for this great end)*—that he might be glorified."

Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by his proceſs, hath laid a foundation for the recovery of all men ; " For to this end Chriſt both died, roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9. He paſſed through all our ſtates, that he might redeem us. He came down from Heaven —he was conceived in the womb of Mary—he was born of her—he lived in the world unknown —he ſympathized with us in our ſorrows—he bare our ſins in his own body, on the tree—he was buried—he deſcended into *Hades*—He aroſe—aſcendeth—ſitteth at the right hand of God—and maketh continual interceſſion for us.

It ſeemed neceſſary, that our Savior ſhould viſit men in all ſituations, that he might redeem them. The apoſtle informs us, ſaying, " Foraſmuch as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame ; that through death, he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life time ſubject to bondage, Heb. ii. 14, 15. It was not only neceſſary that he ſhould die, to vanquiſh death, and to redeem us from its power ; but it was equally needful for him to go into thoſe places, where ſpirits were confined in the regions

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of darkneſs, that he might gain univerſal dominion, ſpoil principalities, and redeem the captives whom he had bought with his blood, in order that he might aſcend up to Heaven, and open to his followers the gates of eternal life.

"Wherefore he ſaith, When he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he aſcended, what is it but that he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth? He that deſcended, is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," Epheſ. iv. 8, 9, 10. "And having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, trembling over them in it," Col. ii. 15.

Thus our Savior by his divine proceſs, hath obtained a right to open the priſon doors, and let the captives go free; and though the rich man was in torments, where he could not get a drop of water to cool his tongue, and had *judgment without mercy*, becauſe he had *ſhewed no mercy;* yet it is poſſible, that, by the blood of the covenant, he may be ſent forth out of the pit wherein is no water. See Zech. ix. 11. The Lord Jeſus is able to take the prey from the mighty, and to deliver the lawful captive, Iſa. xlix. 24.

"Such as ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, being bound in affliction, and iron; becauſe they rebelled againſt the words of God, and contemned the counſel of the Moſt High; therefore he brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help."—This evidently points out the deplorable, miſerable ſtate of ſinners, cut off in their ſins; having rebelled againſt God's words, and contemned his counſels; for which reaſon he hath ſhut them up in darkneſs, and

and in the ſhadow of death; in ſuch a ſituation, that no power but his own, can give them the leaſt help, much leſs *releaſe*. Such circumſtances ſeldom occur in this life; but theſe words are a lively and affecting deſcription of the miſeries of the future ſtate.

"Then they cried unto JEHOVAH in their trouble, and he ſaved them out of their diſtreſſes. He brought them out of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, and brake their bands in ſunder. O that men would praiſe JEHOVAH for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of braſs, and cut the bars of iron in ſunder," Pſal. cvii. 10—16.

This amazing deliverance ſeems to be deſcribed in ſuch language, as correſponds much better with the deliverance of the ſpirits from their dreadful priſon, than with any temporal mercies that are beſtowed on mankind *here on earth*. "The righteous ſhall ſee it, and rejoice; and all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth: Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of JEHOVAH," ver. 42, 43.

Thoſe who are acquainted with the Divine character, and ſee his deſigns of mercy towards his creatures, ſhall rejoice in the ſame: They that are wiſe, ſhall obſerve theſe things, and ſhall underſtand his loving kindneſs; and that "JEHOVAH is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works," Pſal. cxlv. 9.

Thus, how impoſſible ſoever it might appear to us, that the rich man ſhould ever be delivered, we muſt remember, that "with God nothing ſhall

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be impoſſible," St. Luke i. 37. "Is there any thing too hard for JEHOVAH?" Gen. xviii. 14. "Behold (ſays he) I am JEHOVAH, the God of all fleſh: Is there any thing too hard for me?" Jer. xxxii. 27.

Our Savior ſays, (St. Matt. xix. 24, St. Mark x. 25, St. Luke xviii. 25) "It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Whether the word here uſed, intends a camel, or a cable, it certainly implied the greateſt difficulty imaginable, even amounting in the view of his diſciples, to a natural impoſſibility, or they would not have been as the evangeliſt expreſſes it, *exceedingly amazed and aſtoniſhed out of meaſure* at his words, "ſaying among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved?" But, though Jeſus meant to repreſent the matter as in itſelf a kind of natural impoſſibility, and abſolutely impoſſible to men; yet he could not intend thereby, that it never ſhould be accompliſhed, becauſe he immediately adds, "With men this is impoſſible; but not with God: For with God all things are poſſible," St. Mark x. 27. Therefore, though it was impoſſible for *men* to paſs the gulph between *Paradiſe* and *Gehenna;* yet, as we have ſeen, Chriſt was able, and therefore as we know not the *ne plus ultra* of his power to ſave, we cannot poſitively conclude *againſt the Reſtoration*, from this inſtance of the rich man, unleſs we could find ſome paſſages of Scripture, where God has promiſed never to reſtore, or to reconcile ſuch to himſelf, whom he hath once caſt off; the contrary to which, I think, may be proved; but I am at preſent conſidering, that, in the nature of things, it is not impoſſible for God to reſtore the rich

man, if he ſo pleaſes; and, conſequently, others that are in the ſame ſituation.

Behold the rich man in another world!——He ſeems *now* to have much more true benevolence in him, than in his life time; for when he could not obtain a drop of water for his tongue, he pleads much more earneſtly for Lazarus to be ſent to his five brethren, to teſtify to them, leſt they alſo ſhould come into the ſame place of torment with himſelf. Here he urges the matter moſt earneſtly, and does not ſeem willing to be denied. This ſhews him not to have been ſo loſt to virtue as Satan; ſince he and his angels, though miſerable themſelves, ſeek to make all men ſo too, though their torments are increaſed thereby.

Add to all this, that Abraham called the rich man, "*Son*," and bade him remember, that in his life time he had his good things; and likewiſe Lazarus, evil things; and that therefore it was but reaſonable that the ſcene ſhould be changed; that Lazarus ſhould be comforted, and he tormented. And I think, nothing can be fairly argued from his caſe, in favor of *endleſs damnation:* For in caſe he was doomed to ſuffer *while God exiſts*, there could be no proportion between the ſufferings, torments, and evil things of Lazarus on earth, and thoſe which *he* endured in hell; whereas it is intimated in the Scriptures, that all things are determined by number, weight, and meaſure. Let us hear what our Lord has ſaid upon the ſubject. St. Luke xii. 47, 48. "And that ſervant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with MANY ſtripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with

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FEW stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." But what difference, so much to be noticed, could there be, if both were to be beaten *to all eternity?* Or how could either be said to have FEW, if there never was to be an end? Impossible! Rev. xviii. 7. "How much she (Babylon) hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously; so much torment and sorrow give her." All this appears just and reasonable: But to suppose a poor ignorant Heathen, or a child of ten years old, will remain in misery as long as the most persecuting Tyrant, or apostate Christian, seems to contradict all the ideas we have of justice and equity, as well as of goodness; for in this case, who can suppose that each one is exactly rewarded according to his works? And especially, can any think, that *mercy* has any hand in a reward, where there is seemingly no proportion? Whereas we read, (Psalm lxii. 12) "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou rendereſt to every man according to his work."

*Friend.* Indeed, I could not have thought that so much could have been said upon that side of the case; and though I am not yet wholly satisfied, I must confess, some of my great difficulties seem to be removed, from what you have said; and yet there appears something very dreadful in the account. Pray, do you understand it as a parable?

*Minister.* I am most inclined to think it is a piece of real history, known to our Savior, who was well acquainted with what passed in the spiritual, as well as the natural world; and who intended

tended thereby to give an awful warning to the Pharisees, (who were covetous) of the dreadful condition of wicked rich men in the next state; and especially, of those who neglect or despise the poor.

*Friend.* I am inclined to think with you in this matter; and therefore, without any farther delay, I shall pass to mention another strong objection to the doctrine of the Restoration of all men; *viz.* the instance of *Judas;* of whom our Savior says, "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man, if he had not been born. St. Matt. xxvi. 24, St. Mark, xiv. 21. If Judas should ever be restored, how could the Savior say, Good were it for that man, if he had never been born?" I think you will find it difficult to remove this objection; for, if he is ever to be happy, (though after many ages) it will be good for him that he was born.

*Minister.* I cannot think that this is so strong an argument against the general Restitution, as most that use it imagine. It was a common proverb among the Jews, when any great misfortune happened to a man, or his family, to say, "Good were it for that man, if he had never been born." And thus our Savior used it with great propriety respecting Judas; for who, that thinks with any reason at all, would not have wished that he had never been born, rather than to have betrayed the dear Redeemer?

*Friend.* But can any thing less than *endless* damnation be sufficient to justify the expression of "Good were it for that man, that he had never been born?"

*Minister*

*Miniſter.* I am of opinion that even worldly troubles (ſhort as they are) may ſufficiently juſtify the expreſſion. There are a thouſand circumſtances into which the children of Adam fall, that make their caſe infinitely worſe than though they had never been born, even without ſuppoſing a ſtate of future puniſhment at all. I had rather, a thouſand times, never have been born, than to have betrayed Chriſt, even upon the ſuppoſition that I had never been doomed to ſuffer for it beyond this life. Job, when he had loſt his ſubſtance, his children, and his eaſe, opened his mouth, and, through exceſs of grief curſed the day of his birth; though it does not appear that he had any fear of future damnation, but the reverſe.

"And Job ſpake, and ſaid, "Let the day periſh wherein I was born; and the night in which it was ſaid, There is a manchild conceived. Let that day be darkneſs; let not God regard it from above; neither let the light ſhine upon it. Let darkneſs and the ſhadow of death ſtain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackneſs of day terrify it. As for that night, let darkneſs ſeize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months. Lo! let that night be ſolitary; let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curſe it that curſe the day, who are ready to raiſe up their mourning. Let the ſtars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it ſee the dawning of the day; becauſe it ſhut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid ſorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did not I give up the ghoſt, when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent

me ? or, Why the breaſts that I ſhould ſuck ? For now ſhould I have been ſtill, and been quiet ; I ſhould have ſlept ; then had I been at reſt, with kings and counſellors of the earth, who built deſolate places for themſelves ; or with princes, that had gold, who filled their houſes with ſilver : Or, as an hidden, untimely birth, I had not been ; as infants, who never ſaw light. There the wicked ceaſe from troubling ; and there the weary be at reſt. There the priſoners reſt together ; they hear not the voice of the oppreſſer. The ſmall and great are there ; and the ſervant is free from his maſter," See Job iii. 2—19.

From this diſcourſe, it ſeems, that Job thought it would have been better for him never to have been born, than to have fallen into ſuch ſore troubles in this preſent life, without taking the other into his account ; but if he had known that he had been doomed to ſuffer the amazing torments of the ſecond death, in the lake of fire and brimſtone, what would he have ſaid ? Even upon the ſuppoſition that it was only to laſt for ages, he would have thought that his being born into this world, to be fitted for ſuch a puniſhment, would have been the greateſt curſe that could have befallen him.

If Job, who could ſay, " I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth : And, though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God ; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another ; though my reins be conſumed within me. He knoweth the way that I take ; and when he hath tried me, I ſhall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his ſteps ;

ſteps ; his way have I kept, and not declined ; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips : I have eſteemed the words of his mouth more than my neceſſary food. Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him ; but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He alſo ſhall be my ſalvation. My righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go ; my heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live." (See Job, xix. 25, 26, 27. xxiii. 10, 11, 12. xiii. 15, 16. xxvii. 6.) And who could make ſuch a ſolemn proteſtation of his innocence and uprightneſs, before God and man, as we find in the xxix. xxx. xxxi. chapters of that book. If ſuch a man had reaſon to ſay, "Wherefore, then, haſt thou brought me forth out of the womb ? Oh ! that I had given up the ghoſt, and no eye had ſeen me ! I ſhould have been as though I had not been ; I ſhould have been carried from the womb to the grave," (See Job x. 18, 19) with what amazing propriety might Chriſt ſay of Judas, the traitor, who ſinned in ſuch a dreadful manner, and had ſuch horrible guilt on his conſcience; who died in black deſpair, periſhed in ſuch an awful ſituation, in his ſins, and, probably, by his own hands ; who ſuffered the moſt violent agitations of mind, died under the power of the horrid ſuggeſtions of the great enemy of men, without one ſmile, or look of forgiveneſs, from Jeſus, or even daring to ſeek it; whoſe ſorrow in this life far exceeded Job's, (for Job had no ſenſe of guilt, treaſon, and ingratitude ; nor was he filled with rage, blaſphemy, and deſpair)—and who muſt probably have his portion in the ſecond death ;—"Good were it for that man, if he had never been born ! even upon

on the ſuppoſition that his torments are not deſigned to continue *while God exiſts.*

Jeremiah is another inſtance much to my purpoſe; who wiſhed that he had never been born, even at the very time when he knew the Lord was his helper; only becauſe he had been put in the ſtocks by Paſhur, and had ſuffered a little pain and ſhame in a good cauſe. He was not afraid of *endleſs damnation*, nor yet of any future puniſhment; for he thus expreſſed himſelf, in all the language of full aſſurance; "But JEHOVAH is with me, as a mighty terrible One; therefore, my perſecutors ſhall ſtumble, and they ſhall not prevail; they ſhall be greatly aſhamed, for they ſhall not proſper; their everlaſting confuſion ſhall never be forgotten. But, O JEHOVAH of Hoſts, that trieſt the righteous, and ſeeſt the reins and the heart, let me ſee thy vengeance on them (*or*, thou wilt let me ſee, &c.) for unto thee have I opened my cauſe. Sing unto JEHOVAH, praiſe ye JEHOVAH; for he hath delivered the ſoul of the poor from the hand of evil doers. How ſtrong his faith! how full his aſſurance! Yet it is evident, that he thought it would have been much better for him perſonally, never to have been born; for he immediately adds, "Curſed be the day wherein I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bare me, be bleſſed. Curſed be the man who brought tidings to my father ſaying, A man child is born unto thee, making him very glad.—And let that man be as the cities which JEHOVAH overthrew, and repented not: And let him hear the cry in the morning, and the ſhouting at noontide; becauſe he ſlew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave; and her

her womb to be always great with me. Wherefore came I out of the womb, ſo ſee labor and ſorrow, that my days ſhould be conſumed with ſhame?" See Jer. xx. 11—18.

Here is not a word about a ſtate of future puniſhment, much leſs *endleſs damnation*, and yet the good prophet Jeremiah thought, that if he had never been born, it would have been far better for him.

*Friend.* I muſt confeſs, I never before conſidered it poſſible to anſwer this objection; you have done much towards ſolving it; but you muſt conſider, that both Job and Jeremiah paſſionately exclaimed, and, through ſorrow, uttered ſuch raſh words, as, in their cooler moments they repented of; and therefore, what they ſpake of themſelves cannot wholly ſet aſide the objection. Had they delivered thoſe expreſſions as general truths, and declared, that men had much better never have been born, than to have ſuffered ſuch degrees of wordly ſorrow, it would have more than anſwered the objection; but, when men under grief exclaim in ſuch a manner, we cannot ground a matter of ſuch importance upon what they ſay reſpecting themſelves; as their minds, being overwhelmed with trouble, and the immediate ſenſations of pain, are biaſſed, and cannot utter the calm dictates of ſober reaſon. But Chriſt, though under great ſorrows himſelf, ſaw the caſe of Judas ſo deplorable, that he expreſſed himſelf thus reſpecting him; which was the ſober truth, without exageration; and could this be ſaid of him, or if any other of the human race, upon the ſuppoſition that miſery is not abſolutely endleſs?

*Miniſter*

*Miniſter.* We do not find that Job or Jeremiah ever recanted, in their cooler moments, what they uttered in their ſorrows ; and our Lord, ſpeaking of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem ſays, " And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck, in thoſe days," See St. Matth. xxiv. 19, St. Mark, xiii. 17. Not becauſe of their future, endleſs damnation, in diſtinction from others ; but on account of their preſent trouble and ſorrow ; as is explained, Luke, xxi. 23. " But, woe to them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck, in thoſe days ; for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this people." And when the Savior was led to death, we read, " And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, who alſo bewailed and lamented him.— But Jeſus, turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but for yourſelves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave ſuck. Then ſhall they ſay to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry ?" St. Luke, xxiii. 27——31.

And who would not, a thouſand times, chooſe rather never to have been born, than even to ſee, far leſs experience, the miſeries which came upon Jeruſalem and its inhabitants ? Would it not have been better for mothers never to have been born, than to have killed and eaten their own children in the ſiege ? And would it not have been better for the children never to have been born, than to have been food for their mothers ?

But

But Solomon not only repreſents a ſtate of great miſery and affliction in this life, as worſe than not to have been born, but alſo, a ſtate of the greateſt proſperity, if it ends in diſgrace; for he ſays, "If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, ſo that the days of his years be many, and his ſoul be not filled with good; and alſo, that he have no burial; I ſay, that an untimely birth is better than he. For he (the untimely birth) cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkneſs; and his name ſhall be covered with darkneſs. Moreover, he hath not ſeen the ſun, nor known any thing; this hath more reſt than the other. Yea, though he live a thouſand years twice told, yet hath he ſeen no good!" (*i. e.* no equivalent good, to balance his diſgrace.) "Do not all go to one place?" All came from duſt, and turn to duſt again. See Eccleſ. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6.

The ſtate here deſcribed by Solomon, is not only infinitely better than the damnation of hell, though limited by certain periods; but far preferable to many, if not to moſt ſituations of men in this life; and yet he prefers an untimely birth to a man who lives more than twice the age of Methuſelah, and has an hundred children of his own, if he has not his ſoul filled or ſatisfied with good; and that he hath no burial, or has not honor, (credit, *or* reputation) at his death.

*Long life* and *many children*, were formerly eſteemed as the greateſt of bleſſings; but as the things of this life cannot fill the ſoul with good; ſo a man had better never have been born, than to have enjoyed the good things of this world in the greateſt profuſion, if he dies in diſgrace, and has no burial, or is not honored at his death. Yet, this

this is not worthy to be named in the ſame day with the damnation of hell; yet, is frequently threatened as a great and terrible judgment; which, if it falls upon a man, however he may have enjoyed long life, health, wealth, and all kinds of proſperity; it makes it worſe for him than if he had never been born, according to the deciſion of God himſelf; and, therefore, no wonder that Chriſt ſaid of wicked Judas, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

Though I have anſwered you ſo largely, yet one word might have ſufficed to have anſwered the whole objection at firſt; *viz.* Had Judas died before he had been born, and periſhed from his mother's womb, he would never have ſinned, far leſs betrayed Chriſt; he would have entered into peace immediately, "where the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and where the weary are at reſt:" In that caſe, he would have eſcaped the judgment that came upon him, and would have had more reſt than thoſe who ſhould live in all the affluence of life two thouſand years, and beget each an hundred children, and yet ſhould not be honored at their death.

Some would have anſwered the objection ſhorter, by ſaying, Chriſt promiſed twelve thrones to his twelve apoſtles, among whom Judas was one; and therefore, he muſt be reſtored, or the promiſe cannot be fulfilled: See St. Matth. xix. 28. But this I do not inſiſt upon; nevertheleſs, thoſe who anſwer the objection this way, make an obſervation that may be worth attention; *viz.* that Peter, ſpeaking of Judas, ſaith, "Let his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell therein;" that is, Let his

his manſion be reſerved for him, let no man take poſſeſſion of it; but "His biſhopric, or office, let another take." See Acts, i. 20. compared with Pſal. lxix. 25. cix. 8. But I am rather of opinion that the deſolation of the habitation of the wicked, and the want of inhabitants in their tents, reſpects this ſtate, and is part of the curſe pronounced upon all traitors; and may therefore in an eminent ſenſe, be applied to Judas, and alſo to the rebellious nation of the Jews at large; and therefore, as theſe words do not intend their Reſtoration, ſo neither are they any objection to it; for St. Paul applies part of the lxixth Pſalm to the Jews, as truly as St. Peter applies it to Judas: See Rom. x. 9, 10. And yet he ſays, "I ſay then, Have they ſtumbled, that they ſhould fall? God forbid: But rather, through their fall, ſalvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealouſy. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulneſs?" And thus, from the 11th verſe to the end of the chapter, goes on to ſpeak of their being again received, reconciled, and grafted again into their own olive tree; and that their blindneſs is only for a time: "And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved: There ſhall come out of Sion a deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob:" That God's covenant, or promiſe, is to take their ſins away; that they are beloved for the fathers ſakes; that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; that, therefore, they ſhall obtain mercy at laſt; and that, for this very purpoſe, God hath concluded them all (*or* ſhut them up) in unbelief, that he might

not only punish them thereby for their transgressions, and also, through their unbelief, cause the Gentiles to obtain mercy and salvation; but also, that he might have mercy upon all those whom he had thus shut up in unbelief, without exception. See the whole chapter.

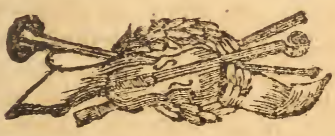
Here, then, are three designs, worthy of a God of infinite wisdom, power and goodness, in this one dark dispensation, the rejection of the Jewish church and nation:——1. That he might punish them for their iniquity:——2. That others might come in their room, stand in their office, and be made partakers of their privileges; and 3. That they might be reserved to mercy and forgiveness at last. And what happened to a whole nation of traitors, might happen to an individual of that nation; and *vice versa*.

*Friend.* This is a subject of great importance, and if you can maintain the system you have espoused, and answer the remaining objections that may be brought against it, it will most certainly give me pleasure, and relieve my mind from great anxiety. I am a father of many children, and God knows the tears I have shed on their account, but could I receive your views with what pleasure should I look upon them!!! But I have many remaining difficulties and objections still to propose; may God preserve me from error and false doctrine, I wish to know what is really the truth in this matter, for above all things I dread deception.

*Minister.* I assure you my friend that I should be as loth to deceive you, as you are to be deceived, and had I not the surest confidence through the Lord of the truth and reality of this most glorious system,

ſyſtem, and did I not find the higheſt ſatisfaction in it myſelf, I ſhould never preſume to hold it forth to others. But as I have an engagement that calls me elſewhere juſt now, I muſt beg you to excuſe me, hoping that in a little time I ſhall have another opportunity of hearing the remainder of your objections; and in the mean time I adviſe you to ſearch the ſcriptures, and pray God to lead you into all truth.

END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.



DIALOGUE

# DIALOGUE III.

*Friend.* I AM glad to meet with you, to have some farther converſation upon the very important and intereſting ſubject of the final Reſtoration. Since I ſaw you laſt I have had opportunity of hearing ſome very capital objections made againſt this ſyſtem, which I beg leave to ſtate in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt manner.

*Miniſter.* Your frankneſs is well pleaſing to me, and I am ready to hear whatever can be urged againſt my ſentiments, and will do my endeavor to anſwer all reaſonable objections; therefore propoſe them as ſoon as you think proper.

*Friend.* One grand objection that is very generally made againſt the doctrine of the Reſtoration, is, that it tends to *licentiouſneſs*; that it is the doctrine that the ſerpent preached to Eve; for we read, (Gen. iii. 4.) "And the ſerpent ſaid unto the woman, Ye ſhall not ſurely die;" and that it is a doctrine calculated to give encouragement to the wicked to continue in their evil ways; that it is "ſaying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" and that this doctrine is as dangerous as that of the wicked proheteſſes of Ezekiel's time, of whom GOD ſays, "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous ſad, whom I have not made ſaid; and ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould

ſhould not return from his wicked way, by promiſing him life. They ſay unto them that deſpiſe me, JEHOVAH hath ſaid, Ye ſhall have peace; and they ſay unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil ſhall come upon you," Jer. viii. 11. Ezek. xiii. 22. Jer. xxiii. 17.

It is ſaid, that it is the nature of GOD to lay the higheſt poſſible reſtraint upon ſin, and, therefore, he has threatened it with eternal, or *endleſs* puniſhment; and this is even found too weak to prevent the prevailing of iniquity. What a flood of impiety, therefore, would overflow the world, if it ſhould be generally believed, that after ſome ages of ſuffering, mankind ſhould be reſtored to ſome degree of happineſs? Would not the reſtraints be wholly taken off from the luſts and paſſions of the wicked, if once this doctrine ſhould become prevalent? Will you be ſo kind as to give a fair and candid reply to this objection?

*Miniſter.* This objection is ſtated with all poſſible force, I ſhall, therefore endeavor to anſwer it as well as I can; putting in this caveat, that if I ſhould not anſwer it to your ſatisfaction, do not imagine that no ſolid anſwer can be given; but impute it to my not being ſufficiently maſter of my ſubject, or not being able to expreſs my mind ſo clearly as I could wiſh. As this objection is frequently made, and often uſed, by people who mean well, but have not conſidered the ſubject thoroughly, I ſhall be as explicit as poſſibly I can upon it.

I would firſt obſerve, that the great truths, or firſt principles, upon which the Reſtoration is founded, and from which it is derived by natural and eaſy conſequences, are far from tending to li-

centiouſneſs : But, in order to make this evident, it will be proper here to ſet them down in their order.

*Firſt Principles, upon which the Doctrine of the Final and Univerſal Reſtitution is founded.*

1. GOD *is the univerſal and only creator of all ;* contrary to the opinion of the *Manichees* of old, who believed the *devil* to be the creator of moſt, if not all viſible beings : The *Muggletonians*, of the laſt century, and the *Buchanites* lately, aſſert nearly the ſame ſentiments ; contrary to Rev. iv. 11. Col. i. 16. Pſal. c. 3. Numb. xvi. 22. Iſai. lxiv. 8. Ezek. xviii. 4. Zech. xii. 1. and a vaſt number of other Scriptures.

Now, who can ſay, that this noble thought, which St. Paul enlarges upon ſo beautifully, (Acts, xvii. 24————30.) tends, in the leaſt, to make men wicked? Does it not tend to dignify and ennoble human nature, to be told, that GOD is our Father, Creator and Firſt Cauſe ; and that we were made by his power, according to his will, and for his pleaſure ; and that the *chief end* for which he made us, was, *to glorify his name, and enjoy him forever ?*—as the Aſſembly's Catechiſm beautifully declares. This is one of the principles from which GOD himſelf deduces the certainty of the final end of wrath, as I have obſerved before :—" For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth ; for the ſpirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made," Iſai. lvii. 16.—Thoſe who venture to contradict their Maker, and ſay, that he *will contend for ever, and be always wroth ;* ought to be able, at leaſt to give as good a reaſon

a reason why *he will*, as he has assigned why *he will not*; and consequently prove, that he hath *not made all souls*; which is the true foundation upon which endless misery must be founded, and the only doctrine which is perfectly consistent with it.

The poor untutored *Indians* in *America*, argued (with a missionary that was sent from *Sweden* to convert them) from the universal providence of GOD, that he, who was so kind a Father as to provide for their bodies all things needful, had not wholly neglected their souls: But this I do not insist upon, though, I think, the argument has weight in it; and, certainly, the providential goodness of GOD, and his long suffering, tends to lead men to repentance; Rom. ii. 4. 2—Pet. iii. 9.

2. *The universal benevolence of the Deity*, or the *love* of GOD to his creatures, is one of the first principles from which the general Restoration is deduced; and who can say, that this leads to licentiousness? If those who believe that GOD loves them, in particular, find *that* consideration the strongest obligation on them to love him again, and to obey his will; by the same rule, if all the individuals of the whole human race, were to believe that GOD loved each one of them, would not the same cause produce the same effect? And if so, can this be charged as a licentious doctrine, which is expressly grounded upon a cause which powerfully operates to produce holiness? Is there any thing like argument in this reasoning: I know that GOD loves me, and seeks to do me good; therefore, I must hate him. What should we think of a woman who should leave her husband, and do all in her power against him, and should be able

to

to give no better reaſon for it than the following: My huſband loves me, and I know it, and he has always loved me, and always will; and, therefore, I am determined to hate, ridicule, deſpiſe, and contemn him, and have left him for this very cauſe, and am determined never to love or obey him more? Bad as human nature is, I queſtion whether ſuch inſtances often occur. We commonly ſay, that love begets love: "We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us;" ſays the Apoſtle, 1 John, iv. 19. Therefore, the doctrine of GOD's univerſal *benevolence*, cannot lead to licentiouſneſs, in any light in which it can be viewed; for, if he really loves us, he will do all in his power to bring us to love him again, and to be like him; and I am ſure, the conſideration of his love to us, goes as far as moral ſuaſion can go, to induce us to love him again, nay, the belief of it is acknowledged to be one of the ſtrongeſt motives to obedience; and the love of GOD, ſhed abroad in the heart, produces the beſt effects, and is the moſt powerful principle, and ſpring, of good and virtuous actions, that we are acquainted with. This being a firſt principle, from which the univerſal Reſtoration is concluded, we are happy to find, that "GOD is love:" and that he "ſo loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life: For, GOD ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be ſaved." See 1 John, iv. 16. St. John, iii. 16, 17. But it is not ſo much my buſineſs now to ſhew, that the ſentiment is ſcriptural, as to ſhew that it is not of a dangerous tendency. The following words, however, are ſo beautiful, that I take

take the liberty to mention them :—But thou haſt mercy upon all ; for thou canſt do all things, and winkeſt at the ſins of men, becauſe they ſhould amend. For thou loveſt all the things that are, and abhorreſt nothing which thou haſt made ; for never wouldeſt thou have made any thing, if thou hadſt hated it, And how could any thing have endured, if it had not been thy will ; or been preſerved, if not called by thee ? But thou ſpareſt all ; for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of ſouls. For thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things ; Therefore chaſteneth thou them, by little and little, that offend, and warneſt them, by putting them in remembrance wherein they have offended, that leaving their wickedneſs, they may believe on thee, O LORD. For thy power is the beginning of righteouſneſs ; and becauſe thou art the LORD of all, it maketh thee to be gracious unto all. But thou, O GOD, art gracious and true ; long ſuffering, and in mercy ordering all things. For if we ſin, we are thine, knowing thy power ; but *we will not ſin*, knowing that we are counted thine :" Wiſdom of Solomon, xi. 23——26. xii. 1, 2, 16. xv. 1, 2. " JEHOVAH is gracious and full of compaſſion, ſlow to anger, and of great mercy. JEHOVAH is good to all ; and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works ſhall praiſe thee, O JEHOVAH ; and thy ſaints ſhall bleſs thee," Pſal. cxlv. 8, 9, 10.

3. Another great principle, upon which the Reſtoration depends, is, *that* CHRIST *died for all ;* " We ſee *Jeſus*, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honor ; that he, by the grace of GOD, ſhould taſte death for *every man*," (*or* ALL) Heb.

Heb. ii. 9. "If *any man* ſin, we have an Advocate with the *Father*, *Jeſus Chriſt*, the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our ſins; and not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the *whole world*," 1 John, ii. 1, 2. "For there is one GOD, and one *Mediator* between GOD and *men*, the *Man* CHRIST JESUS; who gave himſelf a ranſom for *all*, to be teſtified in due time," 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

I need not multiply paſſages to prove that *Chriſt* died for *all*; for though the *univerſality* of his *death* is not expreſsly aſſerted, in every text where it is mentioned that he died, it muſt always be underſtood; becauſe it is never denied in any place, and is plainly, and pointedly declared in thoſe which I have quoted: And, beſides, it is evident that in the apoſtles time, the *univerſality* of the death of Chriſt was a firſt principle, univerſally acknowledged, and, therefore, St. Paul reaſons from it as ſuch; which it would have been highly prepoſterous for him to do, if that had not been the caſe: As, for example, "For the love of *Chriſt* conſtraineth us; becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for *all*," (which is not diſputed by any, and which we know to be a truth) "then were *all* dead: And that he died for *all*; that they who live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him that died for them, and roſe again," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

*Friend.* But have you never heard it argued that *Chriſt* did not *die* for *all*, becauſe he did not *pray* for *all*?

*Miniſter.* I remember, when a lad, I was ſent to a neighbor's houſe, and overheard the good man, the maſter of the family, read in a book, after this manner: "*Chriſt* did not die for *all*, becauſe he

he did not pray for *all :* I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine," St. John, xvii. 9. And I then thought the argument concluſive : But I am now at a loſs whether the author of that book meant to deceive his readers ; or, whether he had never read the chapter through critically : For, had he read the 20th verſe, he would have found theſe words, which would have overthrown his hypotheſis :—" Neither pray I for theſe *alone ;* but for them *alſo*, who ſhall believe on me through their word." If *Chriſt* had prayed for all, in the 9th verſe, for whom he died, he could not have enlarged his prayer ſo much in the 20th verſe, as to take in not them only, but all that ſhould believe on him through their word ; Neither does he ſtop here, but goes on to pray for thoſe that believe, in theſe words ; " That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that they alſo may be one in us :" And, why is all this unity prayed for among believers ? Surely, it hath never been accompliſhed ; but it ſhall be, for this great and admirable purpoſe ; *viz.* " That the *world may believe* that thou haſt ſent me. And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me ; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the *world may know* that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me," verſes 21, 22, 23.

*Friend.* But when ſhall the *world believe*, and *know* that *Chriſt* is the *Sent* of *God ?*

*Miniſter.* When all that believe ſhall be *one*, as the *Father* and the *Son* are *one :* When the great marriage of the *Lamb* ſhall be celebrated, and his Bride

Bride shall be *one*, in the bond of universal love and fellowship, as the *Father* and *Son* now are: When the Church shall be perfected in *one*; shall dwell in love, and dwell in *God*, as the *Father* dwells in the *Son*, and the *Son* in the *Father*: When *Zion's* watchmen shall see eye to eye: When all believers shall speak the same thing; when there shall be no more divisions among them; when they shall be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

This was the state that St. Paul besought the Corinthians to press after, and wished them to attain; but he had the mortification to see them fall short of it, as all the Christian churches have, from that day to this. But when *Christ* shall give that glory and honor to his Bride, which the *Father* gave to him, and shall thus unite her to himself, in an indissoluble union, and the several members of his body, the Church, shall be as much united one to another, as the members of the natural body are; or, to express it in his own words, "As thou, *Father*, art in *me*, and *I* in *thee*;" When thus the Church shall be one, in spirit, love, design, judgment, &c. as the *Father* and *Son* are; then shall the *world believe*, and believing, have life; then shall the *world know* him, whom to know is life eternal: See verses 2 and 3. But as this great *cause* has never yet existed, the *effect* has not yet followed; but when the *first* shall be, the *last* shall take place in consequence.

The petitions in that most excellent prayer, that may, with great propriety, be called the LORD'S Prayer, may be divided into four classes: 1. For himself, verses 1st and 5th: 2. For his apostles, 9——19: 3. For them that should believe, through their

their word, verſes 20, 21, 22, 23: And, 4, for the world, verſes 21, 23; as I have juſt obſerved, and need not add any more upon ſo plain a matter.

*Friend.* Proceed, if you pleaſe, to ſhew, that the doctrine of the *univerſality* of the death of *Chriſt* does not lead to licentiouſneſs.

*Miniſter.* It is evident that it doth not; but, on the contrary, it is the ſtrongeſt motive to all who believe it, to love and live to him who died for them, and roſe again: We *are not our own, but are bought with a price;* therefore, we are exhorted not to be the ſervants of ſin, ſlaves to our paſſions, and ſervants to men; but to glorify GOD in our bodies and ſpirits, which are his; and the apoſtle beſeeches us, by the mercies of GOD, to preſent our bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD; which is our reaſonable ſervice. Foraſmuch, as we know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold; but with the precious blood of *Chriſt*, as of a *Lamb* without blemiſh, and without ſpot: See 2 Cor. v. 15, Rom. vi. 12, 13. 1 Cor. vii. 23, vi. 19, 20. Rom. xii. 1. 1 Peter, i. 18, 19.

What a horrid thought would it be, that *Chriſt* ſhould be the miniſter of ſin, and that his blood-ſhedding ſhould cauſe wickedneſs to abound? The love of GOD, in giving his *Son* to die, is enough to move an heart of ſtone: "For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time, *Chriſt* died for the ungodly; for, ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good (kind, benevolent, generous) man, ſome would even dare to die. But GOD commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet

 ſinners,

ſinners, *Chriſt* died for us. Much more, being now juſtified through his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD by the death of his *Son*; much more, being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life," Rom. v. 6——10.

Here the death of the *Lord Jeſus* is laid as the ground, and the ſalvation of men inferred from it, with the greateſt poſſible certainty; yet, will any one ſay, that becauſe *Chriſt* hath died for him, therefore he will indulge himſelf in ſin? God forbid. Some ſay that if they believed this doctrine, they would live in ſin, and indulge themſelves in their luſts and paſſions: But then it may be obſerved, that thoſe who ſay ſo are its enemies, and thoſe who oppoſe the view, and not thoſe who receive it.

There is ſomething ſo brutiſh and unaccountable in ſuch diſpoſitions, as would lead men to hate their beſt friends, merely becauſe they are ſo; that would lead them to hate GOD, becauſe he loved them; and deſpiſe *Chriſt*, merely becauſe he died for them; that, for the honor of human nature, I would hope, theſe inſtances are rare. But to the point. I have converſed with many who believe that *Chriſt* died for them in particular; and yet I never heard them ſay, that they hated him for it; but, on the contrary, that they loved him exceedingly. Now, is not the ſame cauſe likely to produce the ſame effect? If a thouſand perſons, for inſtance, all believing that *Chriſt* died for them, find their hearts conſtrained to love him for it, would it not have the ſame effect upon ten thouſand, ten millions, or ten millions of millions? And if it would cauſe licentiouſneſs to

abound

abound in the world, to preach that *Chriſt* died for all, if it was univerſally believed; by the ſame rule it muſt cauſe it to prevail, in a leſſer degree, to preach that he died for a ſmall part, at leaſt, among thoſe who believe themſelves to be of the number; and, therefore, it muſt not be preached at all, that he died for any? Who can deny the conſequence? It ſeems to be evident, that *Chriſt* has done and ſuffered too much for thoſe that he died for, to loſe them finally; and thus the univerſal Reſtoration ſtands connected neceſſarily with the univerſality of the death of *Chriſt*, and is deduced therefrom, in the eaſieſt manner; therefore, the doctrine of the *former* cannot tend to licentiouſneſs, as it ſtands upon the ground of the *latter*, which hath been demonſtrated to have no ſuch tendency.

4. Another principle upon which the univerſal doctrine depends, is, *the unchangeableneſs of God:* Whom he loves once, he alſo loves; he loved his creatures when he made them, as none can well deny; their ſins he never loved, nor ever will; he hath declared, that he loved us when ſinners, but never *as* ſinners. His eternal and conſtant hatred of all ſin, and his unchangeable love of all his creatures, are of the nature of primary truths; from which the doctrine of the general Reſtoration may be eaſily and plainly inferred. In this view we may underſtand thoſe many dreadful threatenings and gracious promiſes, made to the ſame people and perſons: Both ſhall be fulfilled; the firſt, while they continue as rebels, which are deſigned to humble and ſubdue them; the laſt, when they ſhall have accepted of the puniſhment of their iniquity; when their uncir-

uncircumcised hearts are humbled, when their stubborn knees shall bow to JEHOVAH, and their former rebellious tongues shall swear allegiance to him.

Does this idea lead to licentiousness, that GOD hates sin, and determines to pursue it to entire destruction, and never to put up his sword, so long as there is a rebel in the universe; yet, at the same time, has no positive hatred to the souls which he has made, but only wishes them to return to order?—This idea appears to me, equally to check presumption and despair; and tends to put an end to licentiousness, rather than to encourage it: For, if rebels are assured that their rightful sovereign hates them, and will never suffer them to be reconciled to him, it naturally causes them to fight with tenfold rage, as all warriors will testify; as, on the other hand, if they believe he is too weak, or undetermined, to conquer them, they will be presumptuous, and continue the war. It cannot, therefore, be affirmed, by any persons of reason, that the declaration that GOD will destroy sin, tends to promote it; or, that his love of order, and hatred of evil, being compatible with his love to the creatures he has made, is a doctrine that encourages men to rebel; the contrary is evident; and yet these are the very grounds of the universal Restoration; which cannot, therefore, be licentious.

5. Another of the first principles of the Restoration, is, the *immutability of* GOD's *counsels;* which he hath confirmed by an oath, "That by two immutable things, (*viz.* his word and oath) in which it was impossible for GOD to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay

lay hold upon the hope ſet before us," Heb. vi. 17, 18. "God hath abounded towards us in all wiſdom and prudence, having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf. That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together (*or* rehead) in one, all things in *Chriſt*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him; in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh *all things* according to the counſel of his own WILL," Epheſ. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. God is our Savior, (*or Soteros*, Reſtorer) who will have all men to be ſaved, (*ſothenai*, reſtored) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. This is the will and counſel of that GOD, who "doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doeſt thou?" Dan. iv. 35. He hath ſworn by himſelf, the word is gone out of his mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto him "every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear," Iſai. xlv. 23. The counſel of GOD ſhall ſtand; he will perform his pleaſure, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition that men can make: "GOD is not a man, that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man, that he ſhould repent: Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? or, hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. If GOD will have all men to be ſaved, or reſtored, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, if it is his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, to rehead all things

things in *Chriſt*, both in heaven and on earth; if he hath ſworn, that unto him every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear; and if he worketh all things after the counſel of his own will, and is determined to perform all his pleaſure, which he is able to do; and with him nothing that he pleaſes is impoſſible: I ſay, if all theſe things are true, (as who, that believes the Scriptures, can deny?) then, is not the doctrine of the Reſtoration true? And who will venture to charge that with licentiouſneſs, which GOD, in the counſel of his will, hath purpoſed, and is determined to perform? We know, the will of GOD is a will to all goodneſs, and that he cannot do any thing unjuſt, or contrary to his holy nature, or inconſiſtent with his plan of moral government, or that ſhall tend to promote rebellion; therefore, if GOD had ſeen that this great work had been, in any reſpect, injurious to his perfections, character, government, &c. he would not have propoſed it; and if he had foreſeen that the knowledge of it would have been hurtful to mankind, he would not have revealed it: But ſince he hath done both, we may certainly argue, that it is not a licentious doctrine to declare, that GOD will finally make all his intelligent creatures happy; by making them all his ſubjects, by deſtroying their ſins, and making them holy, in a way perfectly conſiſtent, with all his perfections and attributes; without doing the leaſt injury to his character, or rendering his moral government weak, or making any of his words void, whether threatenings or promiſes, or in the leaſt ſetting aſide the ſanctions of his law or goſpel, or a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments; without derogating at all from the glory

glory of the Mediator, but rather exalting it to the higheſt poſſible pitch; without ſaddening the hearts of the righteous, or diminiſhing, in the leaſt, from the happineſs of Heaven, but rather cauſing it to increaſe; for if there is joy in Heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, there muſt be more over many, in exact proportion; and as God will certainly give the greateſt poſſible joy to his choſen, and there is no doubt but it will receive addition from every one that is reſtored, or brought home to himſelf; therefore, it can only be brought to its higheſt poſſible pitch by the *univerſal Reſtoration;* which doctrine cannot, therefore, be licentious, as God has appointed and revealed it, and all holy beings (except ſome weak good men on earth) rejoice therein exceedingly.

6. Another of the principles on which the *general Reſtoration* is founded is, *that* God *hath given all things into the hand of* Chriſt, who hath declared, *that it is the father's will, that of all that he gave him, he ſhould loſe nothing;* and that power was given him over all, that he ſhould give the knowledge of God, even eternal life, to all that the *Father* had given him; and that *all*, without exception, whom the *Father* hath given, ſhall come in ſuch a manner as not to be caſt out: But as all theſe Scriptures have been recited, and reaſoned upon before, I ſhall only now obſerve, that as GOD the FATHER hath given *all* things to CHRIST, and as he hath engaged to bring *all* back, without exception, and hath both *will* and *power* to perform this work, and came into the world on purpoſe to accompliſh it, it muſt, of conſequence, be finally performed; yet, it cannot tend to licentiouſneſs, or the God of Heaven, and the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, would never have

have planned it, approved of it, or fought to execute it.

Many more firſt principles, on which the doctrine of the *Reſtoration* is founded, might be mentioned, and ſhewn to be far from tending to licentiouſneſs: But I ſhall mention but one more; and that is—*The Scriptures muſt be fulfilled; the Scriptures cannot be broken:* None of the words of God can fail of being accompliſhed; and he hath not only denounced dreadful threatenings, but made many gracious promiſes to the ſame people: Theſe cannot be fulfilled together; and, if there is no truth in the Reſtoration, I cannot ſee how the *latter* will ever be fulfilled at all; and if ſins are not puniſhed in the perſons who commit them, I am equally at a loſs what ſenſe or truth there can be in the *former*. It would be a great taſk to collect all the texts which juſtify the remark, that threatenings and promiſes belong to the ſame people in different periods, ſome ſpecimens of which have been given in the courſe of theſe dialogues. Now, it cannot lead to licentiouſneſs, to ſuppoſe that the Scriptures ſhall all be fulfilled; but it muſt lead to infidelity, and all kinds of evil, to ſuppoſe the contrary.

Theſe are the firſt principles upon which the doctrine of the Reſtoration ſtands, and by which it is ſupported; and as theſe have all been conſidered, and proved to have no tendency to encourage ſin, ſeparately, much leſs can they have any ſuch tendency, jointly; and then it evidently follows, that a doctrine which ſeems neceſſarily deduced, or inferred by undeniable conſequences, from all theſe conſiderations united, cannot be falſe, or have any evil tendency.

But

But I ſhall next proceed to ſhew, that all true, experimental, and practical religion, ſeems ſo conſiſtent with the *univerſal Reſtoration*, that it may be reckoned a wonder, that all who have taſted that the Lord is gracious, and have diligently practiſed his commands, have not, in all ages, been fully convinced of the truth of it.

*Friend.* Is it poſſible that you can do this? If ſo, I hope your reaſoning will be attended to; and I muſt confeſs, that you have cleared your way ſo well, by conſidering the firſt principles of the doctrine, and ſhewing that they are very far from tending to licentiouſneſs, that I am half inclined to think you will be able to anſwer this objection, formidable as it has been conſidered hitherto.

*Miniſter.* As I truſt you have been made acquainted with experimental religion, I need only to appeal to your own experience, for the truth of what I advance; and I am apt to think, if you will anſwer me candidly, to a few queſtions, you muſt acknowledge either that the Reſtoration is true, or that your experience is falſe.

*Friend.* I am willing to give you as plain and candid anſwers as I can; for it will be of no uſe to deny what the Lord has done for my ſoul.

*Miniſter.* Let me then aſk you, in the firſt place, Did you not ſee yourſelf loſt and undone; and that you were vile before God, unworthy of his mercy, and totally unable to deliver yourſelf from your ſin and miſery?

*Friend.* I certainly did; and I was ſometimes ready to think there was hardly ſuch a ſinner on earth as myſelf, all circumſtances conſidered; for I had ſinned againſt ſuch light and love, that I thought

thought all the world might be forgiven ſooner than myſelf.

*Miniſter.* And were you not brought by the power of God, to reſign yourſelf into his hands, without reſerve, to do with you, and diſpoſe of you, according to his will and pleaſure; being convinced, that he neither would nor could do you any injuſtice?

*Friend.* O yes; and then I found peace; my rebellion againſt God ceaſed; I looked upon him quite different from what I did before; I ſaw that he was wholly right and juſt, and that I was entirely to blame: My murmurings againſt him ceaſed; I viewed him as ſuch a holy, good, merciful, and yet righteous God, that I could truſt my ſoul in his hands, with the moſt entire ſatisfaction.

*Miniſter.* And when *Chriſt* was revealed to you as a *Savior*, how did he appear?

*Friend.* As one able and mighty to ſave, even to the uttermoſt; and I thought there was not only a ſufficiency in him for me, the vileſt of all, but for the whole world, yea, for a thouſand worlds, had there been ſo many. His blood ſeemed to me ſo precious, his obedience and ſufferings ſo meritorious, his power ſo great, his love ſo rich, boundleſs, and free, that I was overcome with the tranſporting view: And as I ſaw him in a fulneſs for all, ſo I found in him an infinite willingneſs to ſave all; for how could I think otherwiſe? I knew myſelf to be moſt unworthy, and that he had graciouſly pitied me: I beheld his love, like a river, flowing down to me as free as water; and I was amazed that I had not beheld it before, in the ſame light. I ſaw, that the love of God to me, did not

now

now *begin*, but was now *manifeſted* to my ſoul. I ſaw that there was no change in God, but all in myſelf. Thoſe words were precious to my heart at that time: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving kindneſs have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3. As alſo theſe: "Son be of good cheer; thy ſins be forgiven thee," St. Matth. ix. 2.

*Miniſter.* You have brought my own experience to my mind:—It pleaſed GOD, by an incident too trifling to mention, to bring me to ſeek earneſtly for an unfading treaſure; and, by a train of circumſtances, fixed the concern deeply upon my mind; and I labored night and day, but could obtain no reſt, till one morning—a time never to be forgotten!—as I was walking on a journey, under great diſtreſs, and when deliverance ſeemed farther from me than ever, all at once, I was brought to reſign my ſoul into the hands of GOD, and thus I expreſſed myſelf: "Lord, here I am: A poor helpleſs ſinner: I reſign myſelf into thine hands; take me, and deal with me, juſt as thou pleaſeſt: I know thou canſt do me no injuſtice." Immediately theſe words came into my mind, with great power and ſweetneſs: "In an acceptable time have I heard thee; and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee," Iſai. xlix. 8. and I had then ſuch a view of CHRIST, as made me to cry out "Glory to God in the higheſt! This is ſalvation; I know this is ſalvation!" Then thoſe paſſages which you have mentioned, came into my mind with great energy; and I ſaw the fulneſs, ſufficiency, and willingneſs of CHRIST to ſave me, and all men, in ſuch a manner as conſtrained me to venture my ſoul into his arms; and if I had ten thouſand ſouls, I could

could have truſted them all in his hands. And, O how did I long, that every ſoul of Adam's race might come to know the love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS! And I thought, I could not be willing to live any longer on earth, unleſs it might pleaſe God to make me uſeful to my fellow creatures.

> "What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!
> How ſweet their mem'ry ſtill!
> But they have left an aching void
> The world can never fill."

This is a little abſtract of what God did then graciouſly teach me by his Spirit; but I had been brought up in the particular ſyſtem, and in the courſe of a few years came to be ſo firmly attached to it, as to refuſe, in my preaching, to make general invitations to mankind at large; rightly reaſoning with myſelf, that if proviſion was only made for a ſmall part, I had no warrant to call or invite the whole to come and partake; and therefore only preſſed the duty on ſuch and ſuch characters, as *hungry*, *thirſty*, *weary*, *heavy laden*, ſuch as were *without money*, *ſenſible ſinners*, &c. all of which I concluded to be of the *elect*, becauſe I judged the Spirit had begun to operate ſavingly upon their hearts; and that to theſe, and theſe only, the Scriptures directed invitations to be made; never conſidering that text—"Hearken unto me, ye ſtout hearted, that are far from righteouſneſs. I bring near my righteouſneſs; and it ſhall not be far off, and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry," Iſa. xlvi. 12, 13. During the time that I remained in this cloſe hearted ſyſtem, laboring with all my might to maintain it, I chanced to come to a houſe, where,

where, as far as I can judge, was a very sensible and pious young woman, whom I never saw before or since: She gave a very judicious account of the work of grace upon her heart; but when she came to that part, where she said she beheld an infinite fulness in CHRIST for ALL the world, I interrupted her, and told her, that could not be; for there was no provision made for all, and therefore it was impossible that she could have any such discoveries made to her by the Spirit of God. This I insisted upon, according to my system, contrary to my experimental knowledge; (O the mischiefs of bigotry, prejudice, and vain attachment to system!) she, on the contrary, maintained, that she clearly viewed matters in that light; and that she certainly was taught to believe, that in Christ there was a fulness and freeness for all: This I denied; and she was thereby prevented from finishing what she had begun. I can never forgive myself, for the opposition I made to what I knew to be truth by experience; and as I did not inquire the name of the person, I have had no opportunity of making a recantation by letter, as I ought to have done; and having never been in the place since, and it being highly improbable that ever I shall again, I feel myself extremely hurt, whenever I think of it.

*Friend.* I can but admire the agreement between us in matters of experience; for I found the same dispositions of mind that you mentioned, when it pleased *God* to reveal his *Son* in me.

*Minister.* I never found an experienced Christian in my life, but would give much the same account, provided that his system was not in sight; and I have found some, that though they were violently

olently attached to the contrary ſyſtem, and knew my intention in aſking the queſtions; yet anſwered the following affirmitavely.

Did you not ſee and feel yourſelves the vileſt of ſinners?

Did you not view the love of GOD infinitely full, free and unmerited?

Did you not behold in *Chriſt* an infinite fulneſs, ſufficiency and willingneſs, to ſave all, without exception?

Did you not love all, and wiſh that all might come and partake of his grace?

Did you not earneſtly deſire the ſalvation of all, not only of your family, friends, neighbors and nation; but alſo of your enemies, and of all mankind? Could you not embrace the whole human race in the arms of benevolence?

Did you not find it in your heart to pray for the ſalvation of all mankind, as for your own?

If you had as much power as good will, would you not bring all to bow to the ſceptre of grace, and to be reconciled to *God* through *Jeſus Chriſt?*

*Friend.* I do not ſee how an experienced perſon can refuſe to ſay Yes, to all theſe queſtions; they are ſo agreeable to the very tempers of the new-born ſoul; and, I am ſure, I found them in my heart, at the very time when I firſt taſted of the love of God.

*Miniſter.* Well then, my friend, let me aſk you, From whence did theſe tempers and diſpoſitions proceed?

*Friend.* To be candid, I think they were given me from above, and came down from the Father of lights, from whence, every good and perfect gift

gift cometh ; and I am the more apt to think ſo, becauſe I found contrary diſpoſitions in my heart before ; and the more I am ſenſible of the forgiving-love of God, the more I find theſe affections which you have deſcribed, and theſe deſires for the good of others.

*Miniſter.* Then let me aſk you, Can a ſmall drop be larger than the unfathomed abyſs, and ocean of Love ? Have you more compaſſion towards your fellow creatures than the God that made them ? Can any effect be greater than its cauſe ? Would you bring all to ſubmit to God, and be happy, if you could ? And will not he, to whom nothing that he pleaſes to do is impoſſible, bring all his creatures to be reconciled to himſelf at laſt ? He has infinitely more love to his creatures, than all the ſaints and angels in glory have ; he is poſſeſſed of infinite power and wiſdom, as well as love ; all means to accompliſh the work are known to him ; he can do it in a way that ſhall cauſe his praiſe to abound exceedingly, in a way perfectly conſiſtent with all his perfections, and the whole of his glorious character ; it is his will and purpoſe ſo to do, as has been proved at large : What, then, can hinder him from fulfilling it ?

*Friend.* I am not able to gainſay this reaſoning ; it ſeems almoſt undeniable : But can you ſhew that the doctrine of the Reſtoration ſtands connected with practical religion, or the keeping of the commandments of God ?

*Miniſter.* I can very eaſily do that, in every inſtance ; but ſhall only attend to the following, as a ſpecimen.

1. Our Lord has commanded us to *love all mankind* ; not our brethren and friends only, but even our

our greateſt enemies ; and all for this purpoſe, that we may be the children of our Father, who is in Heaven, whoſe love is univerſal, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works : See St. Matth. v. 44—48, St. Luke, vi. 27—36. But if God doth not love all himſelf, Chriſt hath commanded us to be *more perfect*, in that reſpect, than our Father, who is in Heaven ; which, to ſuppoſe, is highly abſurd. What ſhall we ſay to that doctrine that teaches us, that God hates, with a perfect hatred, many of thoſe whom he hath commanded us to love as ourſelves ?

Therefore, there is nothing in the doctrine of the Reſtoration, contrary to the love of our neighbor ; which on the contrary is promoted thereby.

2. We are commanded to *do good to all men*, as we have opportunity. This is recommended to us by the example of our heavenly Father, who maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt ; and no perſon can ſay, that the belief of this doctrine tends, in the leaſt, to hinder us from doing good to all our fellow creatures ; but rather encourages us ſo to do, from the conſideration that God loves them all, and does good to all, and is determined to make them all the ſubjects of his kingdom at laſt.

3. We are commanded to *forgive all men their treſpaſſes*, and to pray ; ſaying, " Forgive us our (debts, *or*) treſpaſſes, as we forgive (our debtors, *or*) them that treſpaſs againſt us ;" St. Matth. vi. 12. St. Luke, xi. 4. And our Lord ſays, " For, if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you : But if ye forgive not men,

men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes;" St. Matth. vi. 14, 15. See alſo, chap. xviii. 21—35. St. Mark, xi. 25, 26. St. Luke, vi. 37.

Now, is it poſſible to ſuppoſe, with any degree of reaſon, that our Lord would command us, upon pain of his higheſt diſpleaſure, to *forgive* thoſe whom he hated, and determined to puniſh while he ſhould exiſt, without having the leaſt deſire or deſign to do them good? Has he promiſed us the greateſt bleſſings, if we will forgive all men; and will he never forgive them? He that can believe this, let him believe it. However, ſince forgiving all men is a plain command, which none can deny; I truſt, no one will venture to ſay, that believing the final Reſtoration of all men, at laſt, will have any tendency to made us break this precept of our *Savior's*, upon which he lays ſo much ſtreſs; but, I think, the contrary is evident.

4. We are commanded to *pray for all men:* St. Paul ſays, "I exhort, therefore, that, firſt of all ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God, our Savior (*or* Reſtorer) who will have all men to be ſaved, (*or* reſtored) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man *Chriſt Jeſus;* who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time." This is the great doctrine of the Goſpel, the very foundation of Chriſtianity:—"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apoſtle; (I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." The apoſtle not only believed, but taught; not only taught,

taught, but commanded others to teach and preach this great doctrine, of God's being the Savior, or Reſtorer, of all men: In this he gloried, ſaying, "This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labor and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the Savior (*or* Reſtorer) of all men, ſpecially of thoſe that believe. Theſe things command and teach."

Upon this grand foundation, St. Paul recommends prayer to all men; ſaying, "I will therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting," 1 Tim. ii. 1—8, iv. 9, 10, 11.

Obſerve, the apoſtle recommends prayer for all men; and wills, that men ſhould pray every where, at all times, and in all places, lifting up holy hands, without *wrath* and *doubting*. How nearly forgiving all men, and praying for all men, ſtand connected! and both are plainly and peremptorily recommended by our Lord; who ſays, "Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you."

We are commanded to pray for all men, becauſe it is the will of God that all men ſhould be ſaved; (*or* reſtored) and becauſe Chriſt hath given himſelf a ranſon for all: And we are bid to pray *without doubting:* O, what a word is this! May we, ought we, to pray for the ſalvation of all men, without *doubting?* Surely, God would never have commanded us to do this, unleſs it was his purpoſe to reſtore all men, in his own time; and no man can ſay, that the belief of the Reſtoration will prevent our praying for all men.

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I was once on a journey, and called in at the house of one of my former good friends: Several religious persons were there; and, after some time, my sentiments came to be spoken of, and they seemed to wonder how I could embrace the opinion, that all men, finally, would be saved! I told them, however many might preach against it, that no person, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, could pray *against it;* but, on the contrary, we could pray *for it* in faith, nothing wavering, as God had commanded, and as his Spirit naturally inspired; that no person could pray God not to save or restore all mankind, without being shocked at the blasphemy and impiety of such a prayer; but that our Lord had said, that all things whatsoever we asked in prayer, believing that we should receive, should be granted, let them be things seemingly ever so impossible; that if we asked any thing according to his will, it should be done; and that it was his positive and declared will, that all men should be saved, (*or* restored) and come to the knowledge of the truth; that we were ordered to pray for it in faith, without doubting; and, therefore, it was as evident as the nature of things required, that it would be done; since God had never ordered us to pray for any thing that he was not able and willing to do. This, and much more, I said, and they seemed exceedingly well satisfied; especially, when I informed them, that it was through the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, that the prisoners should be sent forth out of the pit wherein is no water, and that all should be restored through his mediation.

*Friend.* Then you hold that even the damned shall be finally restored and delivered by the pow-

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er of Jesus, and through his blood shedding. I have heard it objected against your scheme, that it tended to set at nought the whole mediatorial plan, and to depreciate the blood of Jesus, which he shed to purge our sins away; though I never observed any thing like this in your discourses, either in public or in private.

*Minister.* No; God forbid that I should ever set aside the blood that cleanseth from all sin; nor can I be charged with it, unless having a much higher idea of its merit than my opposers, may be looked upon as tending to depreciate it. They hold that it shall cleanse a small number from their sins; I believe that it shall cleanse, heal, and restore the whole human race. They believe that its virtue endures for a little season; I maintain that it shall continue to all ages, until all evil shall be destroyed out of the universe.

*Friend.* I am satisfied that you do not mean to set at nought the powerful blood of the dear Redeemer, but on the contrary, you suppose that your views tend more to exalt it. Pray proceed in your discourse.

*Minister.* I need not say much more upon this matter: Our *Savior* has said, "If any man will do his (the Father's) will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself," St. John vii. 17. This is the surest rule; practise religion; love, revere, and serve God; love all men even your enemies; do good to all, forgive all, and pray for all; and then ask, Is the doctrine of the final Restoration contrary to this manner of life? If it be, reject it; for these commands are plain; and if these principles are inconsistent with the observation of these precepts,

precepts, then avoid them, as you would death and hell. But, I trust, it has been shewn that they have no such tendency; but the contrary. For instance, Does this doctrine tend to make us hate God, and his character? Does it naturally fill our minds with *selfishness*, and prevent *benevolence* from ruling within us? Does it fill us with *pride*, and cause us to look down with contempt upon those that are beneath us in life, and banish *humility* from our hearts? Does the belief of this, cause our breasts to swell with pale *envy*, and rancorous malice, at the happiness of others? Does it cause us to burn with hellish *rage*, fury, and madness, against mankind? Does it tend to destroy *meekness*, and increase *wrath?* If these questions require (either from the nature of things, or from known facts) the answers to be in the affirmative; then I would abhor such a system, and wish it to be universally detested: But if, on the contrary, the candid inquirer must answer in the negative, and say, That the doctrine of the final Restoration does not tend to produce *selfishness*, *envy*, *pride*, or *wrath;* but, on the contrary, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men;" that it causes *benevolence*, *meekness*, *humility*, *forbearance*, *forgiveness*, *charity*, and all *goodness*, to abound and increase; then it cannot be a licentious doctrine, and is not to be discarded on that account; for it is a maxim with St. John, that "He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him," 1 John, ii. 10. That is, he cannot receive, hold, maintain, or do, any thing essentially or materially wrong; and, therefore, can give no just occasion of offence: "For, all the law is fulfilled in one word, even

even in this: Thou ſhalt love thy neighbor as thyſelf. For he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not kill, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, Thou ſhalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying: Thou ſhalt love thy neighbor as thyſelf. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law," Gal. v. 14. Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.

But it is not only from reaſoning, but from facts, that I am able to prove that the belief of the doctrine of the univerſal Reſtoration, does not lead men to ſin. The Tunkers, or German Baptiſts, in Pennſylvania, and the ſtates adjacent, who take the Scriptures as their only guide, in matters both of faith and practice, have always (as far as I know) received, and univerſally, at preſent, hold theſe ſentiments: But ſuch Chriſtians, I have never ſeen as they are; ſo averſe are they to all ſin, and to many things that other Chriſtians eſteem lawful, that they not only refuſe to ſwear, go to war, &c. but are ſo afraid of doing any thing contrary to the commands of Chriſt, that no temptation would prevail upon them even to ſue any perſon at law, for either name, character, eſtate, or any debt, be it ever ſo juſt: They are induſtrious, ſober, temperate, kind, charitable people; envying not the great, nor deſpiſing the mean: They read much, they ſing and pray much, they are conſtant attendants upon the worſhip of God; their dwelling-houſes are all houſes of prayer: They walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs, both in public and private: They bring up their

their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord : No noiſe of rudeneſs, ſhameleſs mirth, loud, vain laughter, is heard within their doors : The law of kindneſs is in their mouths ; no fourneſs, or moroſeneſs, diſgraces their religion ; and whatſoever they believe their Savior commands, they practiſe, without inquiring or regarding what others do.

I remember the Rev. Morgan Edwards, formerly miniſter of the Baptiſt Church in Philadelphia, once ſaid to me, "GOD always will have a viſible people on earth ; and theſe are his people at preſent, above any other in the world." And in his Hiſtory of the Baptiſts in Pennſylvania, ſpeaking of theſe people, he ſays : "General redemption they certainly held, and, withal, general ſalvation ; which tenets (though wrong) are conſiſtent. In a word, they are meek and pious Chriſtians ; and have juſtly acquired the character of *The harmleſs Tunkers.*"

Thus have I proved that this doctrine is not licentious ; both from the firſt principles on which it is founded, from the nature of experimental and practical religion, and from facts. As to that part of the objection, which ſuppoſes this doctrine to be the ſame that the ſerpent preached to Eve, ſaying, "Ye ſhall not ſurely die ; it ſeems almoſt unworthy of notice : But as it has been gloried in by ſome writers, as unanſwerable, merely becauſe it was paſſed over unnoticed, as being nothing to the purpoſe ; I ſhall make a few remarks upon it.

1. I ſay, that *Satan* was a liar, and GOD was true : For man and woman did *die*, in a *moral* ſenſe, on the very day that they ſinned ; they became

came dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; they loſt the divine life, and became earthly, ſenſible, deviliſh; darkneſs in their underſtandings, ſtubbornneſs in their wills, and diſorder in their affections, rendered them unfit, unable and unworthy to have fellowſhip with their GOD. But do they contradict JEHOVAH, and join with the ſerpent who aſſert, that JESUS, the ſecond *Adam*, hath quickened, and is able to quicken, thoſe who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins? If ſo, St. Paul joined with the ſerpent, in Epheſ. ii. 1.

2. The ſentence of death was pronounced upon man, even the death of the body, in thoſe words; "In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it waſt thou taken; for duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return," Gen. iii. 19. But, would it be juſt and right for any one to ſay, that thoſe who believed the reſurrection of the body, contradicted God, and, joining with the ſerpent, declared, that men ſhould not die; merely, becauſe they aſſerted, according to the promiſes, that they ſhould riſe again? Would not thoſe who preach *Jeſus*, and the reſurrection, have a right to look upon it as a vile and wilful ſlander, if any one ſhould ſo miſrepreſent the matter? What! muſt I be accuſed of ſaying, that no man ever died, becauſe I believe and teach that ſome have riſen, and that all ſhall be raiſed, at laſt; when even the very idea of a reſurrection, preſuppoſes a ſtate of death?

3. I confeſs, that God has threatened ſinners with the ſecond death; but do I ſay, that they ſhall never taſte of the ſecond death, becauſe I declare, that the time will come when it ſhall exiſt no more? This is curious reaſoning, indeed.

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As well may I ſay, that no man ever lived on earth, becauſe ſo many have died; that no one ſleeps in the night, who wakes in the morning; or, that no fiſh was ever in the water, that was caught and taken out.

Did St. Paul join with the ſerpent, when he ſaid, "For as in *Adam* all die, even ſo in CHRIST ſhall all be made alive?" 1 Cor. xv. 22. Will any ſuppoſe that we affirm, that the dreadful threatenings denounced by God, never were, nor ever will be executed, becauſe we declare, that his promiſes ſhall alſo be fulfilled? Can any reaſonable man ſuppoſe, becauſe Chriſt is the Savior of men, that, therefore, they were not in a loſt condition? How abſurd! when he declares, that he came to ſeek and ſave the loſt!

Thus, though mankind died a moral death, in the day wherein they ſinned; yet, CHRIST is able to quicken and raiſe them up from the ſame; and though their bodies die, in conſequence of the fall; yet ſhall he cauſe all that are in the graves, to hear his voice, and come forth; and, by the ſame rule of arguing, though many ſhall fall under the power of the ſecond death, which is threatened to ſinners; yet as he has promiſed to deſtroy all that bears the name of *death*, their Reſtoration may be fairly concluded, without either contradicting God, or joining with the ſerpent. Had the Scriptures, indeed, contained nothing but threatenings of *death*, without any promiſes of *ſalvation*, *reſurrection*, or *reſtoration*; it would have been preſumptuous for us to have entertained any hopes for the human race, or their deliverance, either from *ſin*, *death*, or *hell*; but, ſince *promiſes* are found, as well as *threatenings*, we muſt not, under pretence or col-

or of believing the *latter*, reject the *former*, left we are found contradictors and oppofers of God; for it is as poffible that we may make him a liar, in refufing to believe the record he has given of his Son, and his intentions of grace and mercy towards mankind, as in difregarding his threatenings, denounced againft them becaufe of their fins.

As for this doctrine making the *hearts of the righteous fad whom* GOD *would not have made fad*, nothing can be more contrary to fact; for if it be the will of God to reward and punifh, and finally to reftore mankind, none of the righteous will be forry, but, on the contrary, will greatly rejoice. It is not God's truth, but mens' lies, of which the prophet fpeaks; which made the hearts of the righteous fad, and ftrengthened the hand of the wicked, that he fhould not return from his wicked way, by promifing him life: But we are fo far from ftrengthening the hands of the wicked, and faying, that no evil fhall come upon them; that we declare from the Scripture, that "the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, againft all ungodlinefs and unrighteoufnefs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteoufnefs; unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteoufnefs, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguifh, upon every foul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew firft, and alfo of the Gentile," Rom. i. 18. ii. 8, 9. And that "there is no peace to the wicked," Ifai. xlviii. 22. lvii. 20, 21. Therefore, they are called to repent, and turn to God; for in fin they never can be happy; no unholy, or unclean thing can enter into the kingdom of Heaven. And fo far are we from promifing them life in their wicked ways, that we teftify, from the Scripture,

Scripture, that "He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life," while he continues in that ſtate; "but the wrath of God abideth on him," St. John, iii. 36.

*Friend.* I had intended to propoſe that text as an objection to your ſyſtem; it is, indeed, one that Dr. WHITBY * inſiſts much upon: But I ſee how you will anſwer it—that the unbeliever, as ſuch, *and while he ſo continues,* cannot ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him, while he remaineth in unbelief; but that God can take away the cauſe, in his own time, and then the effect ſhall ceaſe.

*Miniſter.* Certainly, this muſt be the meaning; for St. John only meant to deſcribe the difference between believers and unbelievers, *as ſuch*; but could not mean to intimate, that thoſe who were unbelievers, in his time, ſhould always continue ſo.

But I now paſs to conſider the latter part of this objection, upon which I have dwelt ſo long; *viz.* that it is the nature of God to lay the higheſt poſſible reſtraint upon ſin, and, therefore he has threatened it with *everlaſting damnation*, which muſt intend *endleſs miſery;* and as this reſtraint is found too weak, wholly to prevent evil, what an amazing increaſe would there be, if this reſtraint ſhould be taken off, in any degree; as it muſt be, if it ſhould come to be known that puniſhments were only *for certain ages or periods*, and deſigned for the *amendment* of the ſufferers?

I once aſked a Reverend Divine, what was his ſtrongeſt argument in favor of *endleſs puniſhment?* and he told me, this which is mentioned above; and, therefore, as it is of conſiderable importance, I ſhall give it a brief conſideration.

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*See Whitby's Diſcourſes.

1. It is not quite clear to me, that it is the nature of God to lay the higheſt poſſible reſtraint upon ſin; and that he always doth ſo, in all his diſpenſations. He ſometimes has higher deſigns in view, than barely to reſtrain ſin; he ſometimes, perhaps, ſuffers it to prevail for a time, that his power might be more manifeſt in deſtroying it; hence we read, "Moreover the law entered"—not merely to reſtrain ſin, but—"that the offence might abound; but where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign, through righteouſneſs, unto eternal life, by *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. Wherefore, then, ſerveth the law? It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made," Rom. v. 20, 21. Gal. iii. 19. St. Paul ſays; "Sin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence; for, without the law, ſin was dead. Was, then, that which was good, made death unto me? God forbid: But ſin, that it might appear ſin, working death in me, by that which is good; that ſin, by the commandment, might become exceeding ſinful," Rom. vii. 8, 13. Perhaps, if the puniſhment of ſins immediately followed the commiſſion of them, it would be a ſtronger and more effectual reſtraint than any threatenings of future miſery; yet God does not think it neceſſary to reſtrain ſin by that mean, though it is expreſsly aſſerted, that, "Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore is the heart of the ſons of men fully ſet in them to do evil." Eccleſ. viii. 11. There is no doubt but if the awful puniſhments of the future ſtate were made

made viſible to our ſenſes, by any means, they would prove a powerful reſtraint to ſin; yet God has not thought fit to reſtrain it by thoſe, and perhaps many other poſſible ways: Wherefore, I have a right to doubt the premiſes; for, if the ſtrongeſt poſſible reſtraints were laid upon ſin, it might not be ſo conſiſtent with a ſtate of probation, as thoſe reaſonable reſtraints which God hath thought fit to lay upon it.

2. But it may be queſtioned, whether there is not ſomething in the idea of limited, yet certain puniſhment, ſo juſt, equitable, reaſonable, and evident; that it is much more calculated to produce belief, and conſequently more effectual to deſtroy falſe hopes of eſcaping it, and alſo to check that daring preſumption, which riſes out of the idea of *endleſs miſery*; than can be found in the contrary doctrine. *Endleſs puniſhment* ſeems to ſhock tender minds, at leaſt. I heard of a little boy, to whom his mother conſtantly kept preaching damnation without end, for every ſin; one day, after ſhe had been diſcourſing with him in that manner, he went to work, but ſoon returned back, ſuddenly opened the door, and with an air of ſurpriſe, cried out; "Why, mother, the law ſays, "*An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot*; but you ſay, ten thouſand for one, and that puniſhment ſhall never end." I have heard of numbers that had no better excuſe for ſinning greedily, than this, *viz.* that there was no hopes of their being ſaved; that, therefore, they were determined to ſin as much as poſſible, ſince it could make no difference. I have reaſon to ſay, from what I know of mankind, that more perſons refuſe to believe in Divine Revelation,

becauſe it is commonly thought to contain the doctrine of *endleſs miſery*, than from any other cauſe: And numbers have embraced it immediately, upon being fairly convinced that it was not neceſſary to underſtand it in that light. And a very ſenſible Deiſt once ſaid to an acquaintance of mine, who believed and preached the univerſal doctrine—"Had I been acquainted with your ſyſtem, thirty years ago, I ſhould have been a zealous Chriſtian; and as great a friend to Revelation, as I have been an enemy." "And, pray, why not now Doctor?"—"Becauſe I am aſhamed, having ſo long been fighting againſt, to receive it now."

3. Though damnation has been commonly underſtood to be *endleſs*, for many ages; yet it has not (as far as we can judge) prevented evil at all, or very little; but I have mentioned before, how very ſtrict thoſe people live, who receive and hold the ſyſtem of limited puniſhments; whether it is, that *endleſs damnation* is too unnatural to be believed, and that *limited puniſhments*, being more reaſonable, ſeem more certain; or whether it be, that by conſidering they ſhall be puniſhed, either without end, or not at all; and every one thinking that endleſs puniſhment is more than they deſerve, but is only reſerved for ſome greater ſinners, and therefore they have nothing to fear from it, I ſhall not pretend to determine; but certain it is, that where the idea of endleſs miſery prevails, it has not prevented iniquity, in the meaſure that might have been expected, on the ſuppoſition of its being the truth of GOD.

4. The great number of Heathens, that die without ever being favored with the light of the goſpel,

pel, and certainly without ever hearing of endleſs miſery; the many that die in a ſtate of infancy and childhood; together with the inſtances of ideots, and perſons born deaf; all convince me, more than any logical arguments that God has many ways of inſtructing and reclaiming his creatures, in another ſtate, that we are at preſent unacquainted with.

5. It is not ſo much the intention of God, merely to reſtrain ſins as to ſhew it in all its dreadful deformity, puniſh it according to its deſerts, and, finally, to ſhew the ſuperabounding of his grace, in overcoming and totally deſtroying it out of his creation; which ſhall be accompliſhed when HE that ſitteth upon the throne ſhall make all things new; "And there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying; neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away," Rev. xxi. 4.

6. As the doctrine of the final Reſtoration, has been ſhewn in itſelf not to have the leaſt tendency to licentiouſneſs, but directly the reverſe; and, as far as I can learn, by hiſtory, or my own obſervation, thoſe who have believed it, in the manner here laid down, as perfectly conſiſtent with a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, have been particularly careful to depart from iniquity of every kind; yet if any ſhould be ſo loſt to all that is good, as to pervert this truth (revealed for contrary purpoſes) to their own deſtruction, they alone muſt bear the blame, the loſs, and the puniſhment. The Scriptures of truth have been perverted; yet, that is no argument againſt Divine Revelation: The Goſpel of the Grace of GOD, has been abuſed; but ſhould it never be preached

on

on that account? Some, in the apoſtles days, turned the Grace of GOD itſelf into wantonneſs or laſciviouſneſs, (See Jude 4); and others pretended that thoſe holy men encouraged ſin, by proclaiming ſalvation to ſinners, through grace, or faith in CHRIST; of which St. Paul complains, (Rom. iii. 8.) "We be ſlanderouſly reported, and ſome affirm, that we ſay, Let us do evil, that good may come; whoſe damnation is juſt"—The holy apoſtle abhorred, and conſtantly denied this horrid conſequence, which ſome perverſe minds pretended to draw from his doctrine; he declared that the damnation of ſuch was juſt, who did ſin that grace might abound, or who affirmed that the doctrine led thereto, or that the apoſtles taught or practiſed any ſuch things; nevertheleſs, (not as fools, but as wiſe) they did not think fit to lay the goſpel aſide, and refuſe to preach ſalvation through CHRIST any more on that account: The ſelf ſame reaſoning applies to the preſent caſe.

*Friend.* I muſt confeſs that you have ſo far prevailed as to ſilence this great objection; for certainly the belief of the Reſtoration ſeems by your account of it conſiſtent with a ſtate of grace, and the knowledge and practice of religion. But though you have obviated ſeveral objections, there is one you have not yet touched, which is very conſiderable, and I am doubtful that it will be difficult if not impoſſible for you to anſwer fairly, it may be thus expreſſed, *God has abounded towards us in all wiſdom;* one inſtance is his hanging out the threatenings of the ſevereſt puniſhments to prevent his creatures from ſinning while in this world; but to tell them at the ſame time, that if they ſhould ſin he means to ſave them, is not *prudent;* becauſe that

that leſſens, if not deſtroys the force of his threatening. He told Adam that if he did eat, he ſhould ſurely die; but did not tell him (at the ſame time) that if he ſhould eat, his caſe would not be remedileſs; this were to take down with one hand what he had ſet up with the other. After the threatening failed of the effect, he told him ſo, and not before, this was prudently done; ſo after his threatenings fail of effect in this ſtate, is the time to reveal his deſign of ſaving daring ſinners. We may therefore be ſure that he has not done it yet, and that we miſconſtrue thoſe texts which ſeem to contain ſuch a revelation. The next ſtate is the only ſtate to preach the doctrine, and reveal the doctrine. If you preach it here, it will be unneceſſary to preach it in hell; for obſtinate ſinners will carry it in their heads thither.

*Miniſter.* As ſpecious and plauſible as this objection ſeems, I doubt not of being able to anſwer it fairly, without evading the natural force of it in the leaſt. The firſt thing that I ſhall notice in this objection, is the very different and contrary manner in which you apply thoſe words of the apoſtle from his firſt evident intention. *He hath abounded towards us in all wiſdom and prudence, having made known unto us the myſtery of his will according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf, that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.* Epheſ. i. 8, 9, 10. God hath judged it to be the height of heavenly wiſdom and prudence to make known to his ſaints, his glorious purpoſe, finally to rehead all things in Chriſt; and we ought not to preſume to be more wiſe and prudent than he.

There

There is no doubt but God hath revealed this great truth more immediately to his saints and faithful ones for their consolation, than for the benefit of the finally impenitent.

It is of amazing, I had almost said of infinite use to the people of God, to have this divine counsel declared to them in the present time. The knowledge of this truth entirely removes all hard thoughts of God from the minds of those who receive it, as I can testify by experience; for since I have believed in the doctrine of the universal Restoration, I have never had one hard thought of God abiding for one minute in my mind, that I remember, and never expect to have any more while I continue to believe it firmly.

The belief of the Restoration is of great use in supporting good people under their sorrows and trials here; the idea that evil shall be destroyed, and all things restored to their primitive glory is the most consolatory of all other ideas. As this doctrine tends to remove the greatest difficulties from the plan of Providence, and also from divine Revelation, it is evident that the knowledge of it must be of the greatest use to all that love their great Creator. And therefore if the revelation of it answered no other purpose in this life, but for the happiness, joy, and satisfaction of such as love God, we might be sure that he hath made it known, and that we rightly understand those passages that hold it forth; for since "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant," Psal. xxv. 14. and "The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets," Amos iii. 7, there is all the reason to conclude,

that

that if God ever intended to restore mankind hereafter, he would not fail to reveal it to his chosen and faithful servants. And this he hath done, if I can understand the meaning of words.

It is true that God did not inform our first parents before they sinned that he had provided a remedy; but not long did he delay after the fall to reveal to them, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; Gen. iii. 15. and this one text contains in miniature all that I believe respecting the Restoration of mankind; for if the Serpents head is finally to be bruised, his power and influence over mankind, must be entirely destroyed; and then what shall prevent their return to God?

Besides, it is impossible to read the Scriptures attentively, and not perceive that God very frequently mixes promises of mercies among his severest threatenings of judgment; and yet he doth not throw down with one hand, what he builds up with the other.

Your object seems to suppose that the doctrine of the Restoration supercedes and sets aside those punishments which God has threatened to inflict upon the impenitent; or else how does the preaching of this doctrine weaken the force of the threatenings? But this is a very false idea; for we acknowledge that the threatenings shall be fulfilled, and not that the disobedient shall escape unpunished. There is a great deal of difference between these two ideas, though you would intimate them to be the same, and that we contradict God by assuring the wicked that they shall escape the just judgment of God. But we only declare that an end shall finally come to their punishment, and that when they

they ſhall be ſufficiently humbled a diſpenſation of mercy ſhall ſucceed that of judgment. Let me aſk you, Has not God threatened mankind with death on the account of ſin? "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return." Gen. iii. 19. Well, tell me, is this threatening either weakened or deſtroyed by the knowledge of the great doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead? Did not God threaten the children of Iſrael with dreadful judgments to prevent their ſinning, and that they ſhould be diſperſed among all nations? But will you ſay that he either weakened or deſtroyed the force of his threatening, becauſe he promiſed them at the ſame time that at laſt he would return their captivity, and reſtore them as at the firſt, and do better unto them, than at their beginning.

The laws of this country condemn criminals to death; would it be thought that I ſhould weaken or deſtroy the force of the penal ſtatutes, by ſaying, that the execution of the law could only be felt for a certain time, beyond which it could not endure? Is not every malefactor under the ſentence of death ſuppoſed to know this? And yet will any preſume to ſay, that theſe laws are entirely weakened, and their force deſtroyed becauſe they do not condemn tranſgreſſors to endleſs puniſhments? But, if it be allowed that torments, which are but momentary, have a conſiderable influence in reſtraining many vices, there cannot be the ſmalleſt reaſon to fear that the doctrine of juſt retribution according to the deeds done in the body, will open the door to vice and immorality, but on the contrary. But this objection is ſo near a kin to the laſt which you propoſed, that it hardly deſerves a diſtinct conſideration; for if the doctrine

doctrine of the Restoration does not lead men to commit sin, (as I am sure it has no such tendency) then no harm can be apprehended from its being known in this state. And whereas you argue, that as it would not be proper for the present state, we may be sure that God hath not revealed it; and therefore is highly proper for men to know in the present state. You will please therefore to notice that the universal doctrine, so far from tending to render the divine threatenings useless or vain, weakening their force, or setting them aside, operates in the direct contrary manner. I as much believe as you or any other man can do, that all the threatenings will be fulfilled upon the finally impenitent; but dare not carry the matter so far as to set aside the gracious promises of God, with which the Scriptures appear to me to abound, in favor of the final recovery of all at last.

*Friend.* It must I think be confessed that if the doctrine of the Restoration be true, it would be matter of great joy and comfort for good men to know it, for they have often great trouble and anxiety of mind on the account of their families, friends, neighbors, acquaintance, and mankind in general; which sorrow would be greatly relieved, could they have an idea of the Restoration of all things in the manner you hold it. But however true this may be, it seems not to be plainly revealed in the Scripture, otherwise it would not be hidden from the eyes of so many great and good men.

*Minister.* It is possible, that a subject may be revealed in the plainest manner, and yet the best of men may remain ignorant of it. For instance, were not the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our

Lord plainly revealed in the Scriptures of the old Teſtament? And yet we know that the apoſtles of our Savior did not underſtand one of thoſe prophecies. Nay, when Jeſus told them openly and expreſsly that he muſt be delivered into the hands of men, and that they ſhould mock, ſcourge, and crucify him, and that the third day he ſhould riſe again, they did not comprehend his meaning; although he ſpoke to them frequently and very plainly upon the ſubject, and ſaid, "Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears; for the Son of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of men. But they underſtood not this ſaying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; and they feared to aſk him of that ſaying." St. Luke ix. 44, 45. And in another place we read, "For he taught his diſciples, and ſaid unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him; and after that he is killed, he ſhall riſe the third day." It is impoſſible that words ſhould be more expreſs, or leſs liable to be miſunderſtood. "But (as the evangeliſt immediately informs us) "they underſtood not that ſaying, and were afraid to aſk him." St. Mark ix. 31, 32. And in the ſame chapter we find, that after our Lord Jeſus was transfigured upon the mount, in the preſence of Peter, James, and John, "As they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what things they had ſeen, till the Son of man were riſen from the dead. And they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the riſing from the dead ſhould mean." Ver. 9, 10. This was what Chriſt taught them not only plainly, but alſo frequently. See St. Matt. xvi. 21. xvii. 9, 22,

22, 23. xx. 17, 18, 19. xxvi. 31, 32. St. Mark viii. 31. ix. 9, 10, 31, 32. x. 32, 33, 34. xiv. 27, 28. St. Luke ix. 21, 22, 44, 45. xviii. 31, 32, 33, 34.

Yet notwithſtanding the plainneſs and frequency of theſe predictions, and the pains which Chriſt took to inſtil theſe ideas into them, they never underſtood them at all until ſometime after they were fulfilled. For when they ſaw him taken and delivered into the hands of men, and treated exactly according to his own words often repeated, they were entirely diſappointed, and all their hopes ſeemed to die within them. And when he was riſen from the dead, they would not believe the teſtimony of thoſe who had ſeen him, and would hardly truſt their own ſenſes, ſo ignorant were they of what he had told them.

St. John was the firſt of the diſciples who believed that he was riſen, for thus he writes, "Then went in alſo that other diſciple, who came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture that he muſt riſe again from the dead." St. John xx. 8, 9. This inſtance is ſo much to my purpoſe, and proves ſo evidently that a thing may be plainly revealed, and expreſſed in the cleareſt manner, and yet not be underſtood; that I hardly need mention any more. But I will mention another, and that is, the calling of the Gentiles. This was ſpoken of by the prophets, in the cleareſt language; and Jeſus after his reſurrection gave a full commiſſion to his apoſtles, which one would think it was impoſſible for them to miſunderſtand.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, Go ye therefore and teach all nations," &c.

St.

St. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." St. Mark xvi. 15.

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." St. Luke xxiv. 46, 47, 48. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts i. 8. But the apostles themselves, even after the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, were without understanding, respecting the calling of the Gentiles, until St. Peter was taught it by a vision from heaven. See Acts x.

And St. Paul speaks of this subject as a mystery that was hid from ages and generations, and particularly revealed to him, and to the saints in that day. See Ephes. iii. 1—11. Col. i. 25, 26, 27.

Wherefore, when I consider that the apostles themselves could not for a time see those things to be revealed, which yet were most plainly, fully, and frequently told them, I cannot wonder that many great and good men now should not see the general Redemption and final Restoration of all things plainly revealed in the Scriptures, though to me scarce any subject appears more evident. It gives me now but little concern to hear many say, that they cannot see the matter plainly declared in the Bible, since I know that things have been there that wise and good men could not see; and

what

what has happened in times past may take place now; and if I can see for myself, this great truth made known, it is enough for me. I am not to inquire, What does this man believe? Or, What shall the other do? I must believe what the Scripture appears to me to teach, and do what I am there commanded, let others believe or do as they may.

*Friend.* But I have heard some say of you, "How comes this man to know more than all the world? Have there not been many great, wise, and good men in all ages, that have never thought of these things? If this doctrine of the final Restoration of all things had been true, surely our wise, good, and learned ministers would have discovered it, and proclaimed it long ago. But the doctrine of endless misery is a point in which they seem generally to agree, however they differ in other matters, and therefore it must be true, and this doctrine of the general Restoration, which this man holds up, almost alone, must be false."

*Minister.* I am very far from pretending to be wiser than any that have gone before me; and as for this doctrine of the Restoration it was not only believed and preached by the apostles, but many of the ancient fathers who liveth in the first ages of Christianity, were bold witnesses for this glorious truth. It is true that when the Church of Rome rose to supreme power, the Popes and Councils endeavored to extirpate the *merciful doctors* (as those who believed the general Restoration, were called in derision) and their adherents, but it was not until near the close of the seventh century, that they were able to silence the witnesses for this truth. This, (as well as many other pre-

cious truths) then lay hid until the reformation, when it began a little to revive, and hath gradually increaſed ever ſince. Several great authors have written upon it; many hundreds, and even thouſands have believed it, and found comfort and joy therein. Nay, there are many miniſters who believe it now as firmly as I do, but do not chooſe to confeſs or preach it, for various reaſons; and great numbers of private chriſtians enjoy the comfort and happineſs of believing it ſecretly. But put the caſe that I ſtood alone in this teſtimony, yet if upon a fair examination, the Scriptures hold forth this idea, and if all objections againſt it may be fully anſwered; why ſhould my teſtimony be refuſed on the account of its ſingularity? God has an abſolute right to uſe what means or inſtruments he pleaſes, to manifeſt his truth, and to fulfil his purpoſes; and though I am nothing, and in his ſight am leſs than nothing, yet he is able by the things that are not, to confound and bring to nought the things that are, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence. 1 Cor. i. 28, 29.

I acknowledge that the generality of miniſters in the preſent day profeſs to believe endleſs miſery, though they diſagree in other points; and indeed one reaſon why they fall out ſo much about other doctrines, is, becauſe they receive this as a firſt principle, as is very obvious; for were thoſe who believe that Chriſt died only for a part of mankind, once to give up the idea of endleſs miſery, they would acknowledge the univerſality of the love of God, and confeſs that Jeſus died for all in the fulleſt ſenſe. And on the other hand, if thoſe who believe in general redemption, were not ſo exceedingly tenacious of the doctrine of endleſs miſery,

they

they would not oppose the doctrine of election, nor hold that the will of God might be finally frustrated, and that the death of Christ shall be in vain, with respect to many, and that many objects of the divine love shall finally perish to all eternity. These inconsistencies in their sentiments, and the contests between them and those who hold partial redemption and salvation, are therefore chiefly, if not wholly owing to both parties being agreed in this most dreadful doctrine of endless misery.

It is beautiful to observe the progression of the glorious gospel, from its opening to our first parents in the garden down to the present day. I have sometimes mentioned, in public, that the more the gospel is known and revealed, the larger and richer it appears.

It first seemed confined to one family or nation, but later discoveries shewed that all nations had a part therein, and all sorts of people were designed to share in its blessings: Now the glorious news begins to be published abroad, not only that all nations, and all sorts of people, but all persons and individuals, without exception, not only *may* partake of its benefits, but *shall* in due time enjoy great advantages thereby.

God always adapts his remedies to the evils that prevail in the world; and therefore he hath opened his counsels to men according to their different capacities, needs, and circumstances. Christianity might, formerly, have been received and sincerely practised, without being investigated at all; but when infidelity rises up and attacks it, as it does in this our age, it becomes the duty of its friends to defend it, by inquiring into its meaning; and laying

laying all prejudices aſide, to receive as truth thoſe things which God hath revealed, and the ſame to vindicate before the world.

It might not formerly have been neceſſary to underſtand all the prophecies; and yet now, as the time of their fulfilment draws nigh, they may become more important, be more ſtudied, and better underſtood; and for this purpoſe, God may actually illuminate the minds of ſome, to ſet them forth in a more rational, ſcriptural, conſiſtent manner, than they have appeared in hitherto. And if it ſhould pleaſe God to make any uſe of my tongue or pen for this great purpoſe, the glory ſhall be all aſcribed to his name, to whom alone it is due; I ſhall have nothing to glory or boaſt of, foraſmuch as I can only communicate what I receive; and I hope none will refuſe to receive the truth, however weak or unworthy the inſtrument by which God may pleaſe to ſend it.

*Friend.* If this is the truth which you hold forth, however contrary to the commonly received opinions of the age, I ſee no reaſon why men ſhould refuſe to hear what you have to ſay; but I have heard many exclaim againſt you in the ſevereſt manner; and declare that they would not hear you, nor read your writings on any account; and others have ſaid, that they could confute and overthrow your whole ſyſtem in ten minutes, but whether they would be able to make their words good if they ſhould enter the liſts with you is another matter, and cannot be determined till a fair trial.

*Miniſter.* I can aſſure you my friend that I ſhould not have the leaſt objection to their making the attempt; for though I am conſcious that neither

ther my natural nor acquired abilities, are worthy to be compared to thoſe of many excellent characters who hold the contrary ſentiments; yet the goodneſs of the cauſe in which I am engaged, inſpires me with courage to attempt its vindication, let who will enter the liſts with me. For when the evidence of this moſt glorious truth firſt began to appear to my mind, I was determined never to believe or profeſs it, until I could anſwer every objection that could be brought from the Scriptures againſt it, fairly and without any torturing or twiſting the words of truth; and it pleaſed God ſo to open matters to my view, as to take every objection out of my mind, and to clear up every doubt, in ſuch a manner, that I have full ſatisfaction: And I can ſafely ſay, in the fear of God, that I am ſo far from being offended with thoſe who queſtion me upon the matter, and thereby give me an opportunity of anſwering for myſelf, that I take it as an act of kindneſs; and as I ſtand ready to be reproved wherein I am out of the way, ſo I ſhall thank the perſon who, in the ſpirit of love, convinces me of error: "Let the righteous ſmite me; it ſhall be kindneſs; and let them reprove me; it ſhall be an excellent oil, which ſhall not break my head." But let not the man who would write, dip his pen in gall; nor he that would converſe, make his tongue as a ſharp ſword; but, "Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven you. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindneſs,

neſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long ſuffering forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye. And, above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs, And let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Theſe are the tempers of mind we ought always to poſſeſs; and eſpecially, when we diſcourſe upon the great things of the kingdom of God.

*Friend.* I have the ſame deſires that you expreſs; and I think it is to the ſhame of human nature, and a reproach to the innocent cauſe of Chriſtianity, that religious diſputes have been carried on with ſuch amazing bitterneſs and acrimony. Men ſeem frequently to forget that they are brethren; and that they muſt all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt. If they remembered theſe things, as they ought, they would not revile, cenſure, judge, and condemn each other, as they do: From which evil practices may the good Lord preſerve us, while we debate this very important ſubject; for though I am determined to urge every thing that I can with propriety, in the ſtrongeſt manner that I am able, yet I am willing to ſtipulate on my part, that if I ſhould uſe any reproachful or cenſorious language in the remainder of the debate, I will give you leave to conſider it as totally giving up the cauſe in which I am engaged.

*Miniſter.* And I hereby promiſe the ſame; for I am determined never to write a page of controverſy, unleſs it can be written in the very ſpirit of love and true benevolence, with a ſincere deſire to find and embrace the truth.

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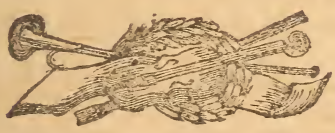
The want of this in most controversial writers, has made serious people so weary of controversy, that they will neither read nor hear it on any account ; nor can I wonder at it, for such bitterness tends entirely to root out the spirit of true religion.

*Friend.* I hope we shall shew an example to mankind, how disputes ought to be carried on ; in love, and in the fear of God, and for the purpose of mutual edification. But as our present discourse has been long and very important, I will take my leave of you for this time, hoping at a future opportunity to have more conversation with you on this so interesting a subject.

END OF THE THIRD DIALOGUE.



DIALOGUE

## DIALOGUE IV.

*Friend.* I AM happy to have another opportunity of diſcourſing with you, concerning that point in which you differ from your brethren, the final Reſtoration of all things. I have thought much of the ſubject ſince I ſaw you; and though I muſt acknowledge, that you have anſwered, as far as I can ſee, ſome of the greateſt objections that I have found in the Scriptures; yet a conſiderable number remain to be anſwered, before I can venture to receive as a truth, what I have hitherto looked upon as a *dangerous hereſy;* and as I have many queſtions to propoſe, I wiſh to make the beſt uſe of my time.

*Miniſter.* Propoſe your objections, as freely as you pleaſe; and I will endeavor to anſwer them as briefly, and at the ſame time as plainly as poſſible.

*Friend.* CHRIST threatens the *Jews* with an eternal excluſion from his preſence: "Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come," St. John vii. 34. Then ſaid JESUS again unto them, I go my way, and ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall die in your ſins: Whither I go, ye cannot come. Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world I am not of this world. I ſaid therefore unto you, That ye ſhall

ſhall die in your ſins ; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins," St. John viii. 21, 23, 24.

*Miniſter.* Do you recollect that our LORD uſes words nearly ſimilar to ſome of theſe, to his own diſciples ?

*Friend.* No, indeed ; I do not remember any ſuch like expreſſions uſed to them : Can you ſhew them to me ?

*Miniſter.* If I do, will you acknowledge the force of the objection to be removed ?

*Friend.* Certainly, I muſt.

*Miniſter.* Then read St. John xiii. 33. " Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye ſhall ſeek me, and, as I ſaid unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come ; ſo now I ſay unto you."

*Friend.* I am ſurprized that I ſhould never have obſerved this before—Let me read the paſſage—Oh ! but ſtop—it is explained in the 36th verſe : " Simon Peter ſaid unto him, LORD, whither goeſt thou ? Jeſus anſwered him, Whither I go, thou canſt not follow me now ; but thou ſhalt follow me afterwards." But nothing of the kind is intimated reſpecting the *Jews*.

*Miniſter.* Not in that text, I confeſs ; but in many others it is more than intimated, that they ſhall come to know and love him, yea, and to behold him as their friend. I think, it is intimated in thoſe words which our Savior uſed, in the cloſe of his threatenings to Jeruſalem :—" Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate ; and verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, until the time come when ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD," St. Matth.

xxiii. 38, 39. St. Luke xiii. 35. It is more than intimated in these words—"And so *all Israel* shall be saved. For GOD hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," Rom. xi. 26, 32. "In JEHOVAH shall *all* the seed of *Israel* be justified, and shall glory," Isai. xlv. 25. "I will call them my people, who were not my people; and her Beloved, that was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called, The children of the living God," Rom. ix. 25, 26. "Now will I bring again the captivity of *Jacob*, and have mercy upon the *whole* house of *Israel*: I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them," Ezek. xxxix. 25, 28. "And I will multiply men upon you, (the mountains of Israel) *all* the House of *Israel*, even *all* of it," xxxvi. 10. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am JEHOVAH, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I, JEHOVAH, have spoken it, and performed it, saith JEHOVAH," chap. xxxvii. 12, 13, 14.

*Friend.* But this returning from captivity, can only respect such as are alive at that period, when the LORD shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people from Assyria, &c.

*Minister.* That is more than any one can prove: as the expression is sometimes used evidently for the

the Reſtoration of ſuch whoſe bodies are deſtroyed, beyond diſpute; as, in the caſe of *Sodom* and her daughters, who were taken away, by fire and brimſtone from heaven, whoſe captivity GOD promiſes to return, together with the captivity of *Samaria*, and her daughters, at the ſame time that he will bring again the captivity of *Jeruſalem*, and her daughters, in the midſt of them. See Ezek. xvi. 44———63; eſpecially, verſes 53, 55, 61.

*Friend.* But Mr. POOLE's Continuators, as well as many other eminent divines, tell us, that theſe which you take to be promiſes, are only dreadful threatenings; and their meaning is this:—I never will bring again the captivity of *Samaria*, and her daughters; nor the captivity of *Sodom*, and her daughters; neither will I ever bring again the captivity of *thy captives*, in the midſt of them; when *Sodom* and her daughters ſhall return to their former eſtate, (which is impoſſible) and *Samaria* and her daughters ſhall return to their former eſtate, (which ſhall never be) then *thou* and thy daughters ſhall return to your former eſtate; but that time ſhall never come.

*Miniſter.* I know, ſuch is their interpretation, which proves nothing more than the weakneſs of their cauſe; for in all this, they expreſsly contradict GOD, who, from the 60th verſe to the end of the chapter, promiſes bleſſings to Jeruſalem in the moſt abſolute manner: That he will remember the covenant made with her in the days of her youth, and will eſtabliſh unto her an everlaſting covenant; that ſhe ſhall receive her ſiſters, *Samaria* and *Sodom*, (called her *elder* and her *younger* ſiſters;) and he promiſes to give them to her, for daughters;

daughters; not by the first covenant, indeed, but by the new and everlasting covenant, which he will make in those days; then shall the covenant be firmly established with her; she shall know JEHOVAH; shall remember, and be confounded; and never shall open her mouth in pride any more, because of her former sin and shame, when GOD shall be pacified toward her, for all that she hath done.

How many promises has GOD made to *Jerusalem*, in the prophecies, of not only bringing her *captivity*, and returning her to her *former estate;* but even causing greater blessings than ever to come to her, and of doing *better* to her than in her *beginning*, making her an *eternal excellency*, a *joy* of *many generations*, &c.

It is therefore very surprising, that men professing to believe the Bible, should dare be so bold as to deny these promises, and declare, that GOD will never bring *Jerusalem* to her former estate! They might, indeed, safely say, that the promises have not yet been fulfilled; but it is too bold to assert, That therefore they will never be accomplished. Were there no other text to prove the Restoration of the Jews who died in their sins, and indeed of the whole fallen race of Adam, I should Judge this sufficient;—"*All* that the *Father giveth me, shall come to me;* and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the *Father's* will, which hath sent me, that of *all* which he hath given me, I should lose *nothing;* but should raise it up again at the last day," St. John vi. 37, 38, 39. Here we find that *Christ*, our *Lord*, declares, not only that

that *all* that the *Father giveth* him *shall come* to him; but also, that they shall come in such a manner, as in no wise to be *cast out*; and that such is the *Father's* will, that nothing of all which he hath given to the *Son* should be lost, or missing, at that great day when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the *Father*, who did put all things under him; and as this is the will of that *God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;* and as *Christ* has undertaken the accomplishment of this will of the *Father*, it concludes absolutely and forcibly against the doctrine of *endless misery*, and *annihilation.*

*Friend.* It certainly does, with respect to all those whom the *Father giveth*, or hath given, to the *Son;* but to none else.

*Minister.* That is all that I contend for: I ground the Universal Restoration of all things, upon these two premises, which I call the *major* and the *minor.* 1. That *all things* are given to the *Son*, without exception: 2. That *all* that are *given him, shall come to him*, in such a manner as *not to be cast out;* and that none shall be missing, lost, or wholly destroyed, but shall be forthcoming, in that great day when *Christ* shall give up the kingdom to the *Father.*

*Friend.* But can you prove your *major?* I am sensible that the *minor* has been the great foundation upon which *particular redemption*, &c. has been supported; but if the *major* can be proved, it will set the strongest weapons of those who hold *partial decrees*, &c. directly against them, and will give another turn to the argument.

*Minister.* I can prove the *major* by the same positive expressions as the *minor*, and by more passa-

ges of Scripture; and you shall judge for yourself, whether I quote them fairly, and whether they can be invalidated by any arguments which will not, at the same time, invalidate the *minor*. I will set down the several texts at large, as they are of great importance.

St. Matth. xi. 27. "*All things* are delivered unto me of my *Father*; and no man knoweth the *Son* but the *Father;* neither knoweth any man the *Father*, save the *Son*, and he to whomsoever the *Son* will reveal him." The very same words are mentioned by St. Luke: See chap. x. 22.

But the most striking passages of this kind, are found in the gospel of St. John, chap. iii. 35, and xiii. 3. "The *Father* loveth the *Son*, and hath given *all things* into his hands. *Jesus* knowing that the *Father* had given *all things* into his hands, and that he was come from *God*, and went to *God*, &c."

*God* hath moreover said to his *Son*, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," Psal. ii. 8.

Thus, *all things* are given to *Christ*, without exception. The *major* and *minor* being both proved from Scripture, we may venture to draw this conclusion:

If *all things* are given into the hands of *Christ*, by the *Father;* and all that the *Father* giveth, or hath given, shall come to *Christ*, in such a manner as not to be cast out; then shall all men be restored.

Here the whole Christian world may unite, without either party being obliged to give up their favorite tenets; and while some strongly contend,

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and prove from Scripture, that *all things* are delivered into the hands of *Jesus*; let the others go on to prove, that *all* that the *Father* giveth, shall come in such a manner as not to be cast out: Thus shall the truth be promoted mutually and equally, by those who seem to contradict each other; but neither shall, in that case, contradict what our Lord hath said.

But as *all things*, or *all men*, without exception, are given to *Jesus*, that he might restore, or bring them back to GOD, in his own way and time; so is he invested with *all power*, that he might be able to accomplish so great a work. *Jesus* spake, saying, "*All power* is given unto me, in Heaven and in earth," St. Matth. xxviii. 18. "For as the *Father* hath life in himself, so hath he given to the *Son* to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man," St. John v. 26, 27. *Jesus* or *Lord*, has power to quicken souls who are dead in trespasses and sins; see Ephes. ii. 1. He himself saith; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the *Son* of *God*; and they that hear shall live, St. John v. 25. He hath power to raise all the dead that are in the graves; for he saith "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation," verse 29. But he has not only power to raise the dead, and quicken whom he will; to give rewards to them that love him, and to pass sentence of judgment and condemnation upon his foes, and they that

that have done evil; but has alſo power to *ſubdue all things* unto himſelf, to *reconcile all things*, and to *rehead all things* in himſelf: And whatever methods he may uſe towards mankind, and whatever miſeries he may ſuffer them to feel for their ſins, and how long ſoever the dreadful age of judgment and fiery indignation may laſt, *Chriſt* has given us to underſtand, in his prayer to the *Father*, that the power which he hath, was given with a deſign far ſuperior to this, (though judgment is included)—he ſaith, (in that addreſs which, for its grandeur, beauty, ſimplicity, and majeſty, never was equalled;) "As thou haſt given him power over *all fleſh*, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many (*pan*, ALL) as thou haſt given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true *God*, and *Jeſus Chriſt* whom thou haſt ſent," St. John xvii. 2, 3. Here we ſee, that his power over all fleſh was given him for this grand purpoſe, that ultimately he might give eternal life; not only endleſs exiſtence, but the knowledge of *God* and his *Chriſt*, to *all* that the *Father* hath given him; which are all without exception.—This is the will of *God*, that of *all* which he hath given the *Son*, he ſhould loſe nothing; but ſhould give eternal life, even the knowledge of *God*, which he alone can give, to all, without reſerve, whom the *Father* hath given him; this is the will which *Chriſt* came to do, and this he hath power to perform.—Now, if he came purpoſely to do the will of *God*; and if it is the will of *God*, that of all that the *Father* hath given to the *Son*, he ſhould loſe nothing; but ſhould bring all to himſelf, in ſuch a manner as that they ſhould not be caſt out; and give them all eternal life; and if all, without

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reserve, are given to him, and universal power and dominion are his, for this very purpose; if all these premises are true—as who can deny?—then nothing can be more evident than this conclusion, *viz.* that *All shall be at last restored.*

"It is written in the prophets, (saith Jesus—And they shall all be taught of *God.* Every man therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the *Father*, cometh unto me," St. John vi. 45.—If *all* shall be taught of *God;* and *all* that are taught shall come to *Christ;* and none that come to him shall be cast out or rejected; if all these premises are true (and, I think, they are fully proved;) how very naturally the conclusion follows, *viz.* that all shall be finally brought home to *God*, before *Christ* shall resign the kingdom to the *Father.*

Our blessed Lord is invested with power sufficient to perform this work: It is the will of *God* that it should be done; *Christ* came into the world on purpose to begin, and lay a foundation for the same; he hath laid a sufficient foundation, by tasting death for *all;* one died for *all;* he gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time; and he seemed confident that he should be able to accomplish this *will* of the *Father*, when he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* unto me," St. John xii. 32. He *was* lifted up from the earth, and therefore the IF is now no more; he will certainly draw all unto himself, and give eternal life, or the knowledge of *God* to all. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied:* And who can conceive how much it will take to satisfy the capacious soul of the *Son of God*, and especially after having borne such deadly pains for *all?* These passages, my friend, establish my mind,

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in the belief of the final univerſal Reſtitution, beyond all heſitation ; nevertheleſs, I would not wiſh to force your aſſent, were it in my power, but only to lay before you that evidence which was wrought upon me, and has brought me over, notwithſtanding my education, prejudices, former ſentiments, cuſtom, the multitude, my intereſt, my honor, and connexions, were all againſt it.

*Friend.* I ſuppoſe you know the expoſitions that are given by the generality of expoſitors upon all theſe texts ; and it is a fact that thouſands and millions of great and good men have read them, many have preached from them, and yet never ſaw any thing like the univerſal Reſtoration contained in them ; but if the doctrine be true, and be at all intended to be ſet forth in the Scriptures, I muſt ſuppoſe that the paſſages you have mentioned, may allude to it ; but I have many objections yet to propoſe, which muſt be fairly anſwered before I can receive it.

*Miniſter.* I would chooſe you ſhould propoſe every objection that you can, eſpecially thoſe that may be brought from the ſacred page ; not only for your own ſatisfaction, but leſt any ſhould be led to ſuppoſe that objections of the greateſt force are purpoſely kept back, becauſe no ſolid anſwers could be found ; whereas I am deſirous of hearing whatever can be fairly urged from the Scriptures againſt this view, and make no doubt of being able to ſhew, that all may be fully anſwered.

*Friend.* What do you think of thoſe paſſages, where GOD is repreſented as ſwearing in his wrath that unbelievers ſhall not enter into his reſt, which are found in Pſal. xcv. 11. Heb. iii. 11, 18, 19. Chap. iv. 3, 6, compared with Numb. xiv. Do they

they not ſeem to cut off all hopes of the reſtoration of thoſe who die in their ſins ?

*Miniſter.* By the *reſt* that was promiſed to the children of Iſrael, which they forfeited by their unbelief, we muſt underſtand the land of *Canaan*, and not the final ſtate of happineſs. For who can ſuppoſe, that out of more than ſix hundred thouſand men, beſides women, only two will be ſaved ?—and that even *Moſes* and *Aaron*, thoſe ſaints of the Lord, will be loſt among the reſt ? For they, as well as others, entered not in ; becauſe they believed not God, to ſanctify him before the congregation : (See Numb. xx. 12.) Only *Caleb* and *Joſhua* entered into that *reſt*, for they followed the *Lord* fully ; and they are typical of thoſe who ſhall follow the Lamb in all ages, ſo as to obtain a part in the *firſt reſurrection*, over whom the ſecond death ſhall have no power ; they who are *called*, and *choſen*, and *faithful*, and are *overcomers*, ſhall reign with *Chriſt* on earth during the *Millenium*, which is the *reſt* that was pointed out by the land of *Canaan*.

*Friend.* Is it, indeed ? We have commonly underſtood that *reſt* which the children of Iſrael had in the promiſed land, as typical of Heaven and eternal felicity.

*Miniſter.* This cannot be ; ſince it is evident that mighty wars were waged, and dreadful battles fought, thirtyone kings and kingdoms were conquered and ſubdued by Joſhua and the Iſraelites, after they paſſed over Jordan ; it was not a perfect *reſt*, but only a type of that keeping of the ſabbath which remains for the people of GOD, into which we are exhorted to enter ; which is the time when our *Lord*, after having conquered the nations of the

the earth, shall reign for a *thousand years*, before the second resurrection; but as many of the Israelites may be saved in the day of the Lord, whose carcases fell in the wilderness; so, likewise, shall the names of many be found in the book of life, at the general judgment, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before GOD, who were not worthy to have a part in the first resurrection. These passages, therefore, conclude strongly against *those* having a part in the first resurrection; but nothing against the final Restoration, which is a state far beyond, and belongs to another dispensation.

*Friend.* This is quite a different comment from what I have ever heard before; but allowing this objection to be answered, I have another in my mind, that appears very difficult, and I should be glad to know what you can say upon it; it is drawn from Isaiah xxvii. 11. "For it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favor." How can they ever be restored, if GOD will not have mercy upon them, nor shew them any favor?

*Minister.* If we did not understand these words with some limitation, it would be as difficult to reconcile them with other passages of Scripture, as with the doctrine of the Restoration; but if we only limit the time, all is easy; "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy;" nevertheless it is added, "but mercy rejoiceth against judgment," James ii. 13. The way I answer all these threatenings, and shew them to be consistent with that boundless mercy of GOD, that is over all his works, is, to shew, that both wrath and mercy have their season; that *anger endureth*

*dureth* but a *moment*, but that *mercy endureth for ever;* which glorious declaration is expreſſed more than forty times in the Scripture; and that God frequently threatens the greateſt judgments, and promiſeth the greateſt mercies, to the ſame people and perſons. "Thus ſaith JEHOVAH, Thy bruiſe is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cauſe, that thou mayeſt be bound up; thou haſt no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they ſeek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chaſtiſement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; becauſe thy ſins were increaſed. Why crieſt thou for thine affliction? Thy ſorrow is incurable, for the multitude of thine iniquity; becauſe thy ſins were increaſed, I have done theſe things unto thee." Now, who would not think, from reading theſe words, that theſe people were in a moſt hopeleſs ſtate, beyond the reach of mercy; and that it was in vain even for them to ſeek it?—And yet the very next words ſpeak a language directly contrary. "Therefore all they that devour thee, ſhall be devoured, &c. For I will reſtore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, ſaith JEHOVAH; becauſe they called thee an Outcaſt, ſaying, This is *Zion*, whom no man ſeeketh after." See Jer. xxx. 12—17. I could juſtify this obſervation by hundreds of paſſages wherein God threatens his people with judgments the moſt ſevere, and declares—that his eyes ſhall not pity, nor his arm ſave; that he will viſit their tranſgreſſions upon them, will utterly caſt them off, and will not have compaſſion on them at all; and then ſuch promiſes of mercy break out as are ſufficient to aſ-

toniſh every one with their greatneſs. But time would fail to quote them at large. GOD, by Hoſea, ſays, "I will no more have mercy upon the houſe of Iſrael; but I will utterly take them away. For ye are not my people, and I will not be your God." And then immediately ſays, ſpeaking of a time to come, "And it ſhall come to paſs, that in the place where it was ſaid unto them, Ye are not my people, there it ſhall be ſaid unto them, "Ye are the ſons of the living GOD." See Hoſea, i. 6. 9, 10.

The whole prophecy, indeed, ſeems of a piece with this ſpecimen. In the ſecond chapter it is ſaid, "Plead with your mother, plead; for ſhe is not my wife, neither am I her huſband; and I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms." Then he goes on to pronounce many dreadful threatenings; but the chapter cloſes with the moſt amazing promiſes of mercies to the ſame people, under the ſimilitude of a wife that had been rejected, and after a long time received again. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt know the *Lord*. And I will ſow her unto me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will ſay to them who are were not my people, Thou are my people; and they ſhall ſay, Thou art my GOD;" See Hoſ. ii. 2, 4, 19, 20, 23. Thus the objection admits of a fair and rational anſwer; and I have been the larger upon it, becauſe I judged it of great importance to clear it up thoroughly; but more paſſages upon this

this ſubject are needleſs, or I could eaſily produce great numbers, that ſpeak to the ſame purpoſe.

*Friend.* You have ſeemed to come over this objection rather better than I could have expected, but I muſt beg leave to aſk you, What you do with that paſſage; (Pſalms xlix. 19.) "He ſhall go to the generation of his fathers; they ſhall never ſee light?"

*Miniſter.* I render the words *gnad natzah*, "until ſubdued and overcome, they ſhall not ſee the light; *or*, until the age, or a certain period, they ſhall not ſee the light." The ſame words are uſed in Job xxxiv. 36, where they are rendered "*unto the end.*" "My deſire is, that Job may be tried unto the end. How would it ſeem to render the words thus—"My deſire is, that Job may be tried *never; or*, may *never* be tried?" This would be quite inconſiſtent with the nature of things, as well as a contradiction in the words themſelves; For firſt to ſay, "My deſire is, that Job may be tried," and then to add words that mean *never*, is quite ridiculous even to ſuppoſe; but render the words, *unto a time* or *period*," or as they will bear, "*until he be ſubdued* or *overcome*," and the meaning is both plain and benevolent; but to wiſh him tried *for ever*, world without end, would be a moſt malevolent wiſh—and to wiſh him tried *never*, would be nonſenſe.

*Friend.* This tranſlation is very different from that which we commonly read, in which the text appears a very formidable objection indeed; for if they ſhall never ſee the light, they cannot be reſtored.

*Miniſter.* The word *never* is ſometimes uſed in our tranſlation, in ſuch a manner as to oblige us to

to underſtand it in a limited ſenſe, as has been proved before ; Lev. vi. 13. " The fire ſhall ever be burning upon the altar, it ſhall *never* go out ;" and in ſeveral other places.

*Friend.* I muſt allow that the words you mention ſeem very ſtrong and abſolute, but the very reaſon of things obliges us to limit their meaning to a period or age ; but where no ſuch neceſſity appears we muſt underſtand ſuch words in the moſt abſolute and unlimited ſenſe.

*Miniſter.* I think there is as abundant reaſon from Scripture to limit the time of puniſhment as any thing whatever ; as I truſt will appear in the courſe of our converſation, for which purpoſe I ſhall be glad to hear all that you are able to urge againſt the doctrine of the Reſtoration.

*Friend.* The next objection I ſhall bring is from Job xxxvi. 18. " Becauſe there is wrath, beware leſt he take thee away with his ſtroke ; then a great ranſom cannot deliver thee." By which we underſtand, that after death there is no deliverance, no, not even by that *great ranſom* the blood of *Chriſt*.

*Miniſter.* This would be one of the ſtrongeſt objections that you have yet advanced, if the words *a great ranſom*, had any alluſion to the blood of the dear *Redeemer*, and if it could be fairly demonſtrated, that it can have no power over the dead ; but I apprehend, when you read and conſider the text, context, and ſimilar paſſages, you will ſee that no ſuch thing is intended.

*Job* had frequently wiſhed for death in his trouble and anguiſh, (as many perſons fooliſhly and wickedly do, that have never felt the tenth part of his afflictions) for which *Elihu* juſtly reproves him,

him, in these words :. " Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke ; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," from death and the grave ; from being cut off by the hand of Heaven, justly provoked by thy rashness : " Will he esteem thy riches ?" Will he account thy great riches a ransom for thy life ? " No not gold, nor all the forces of strength :" Wouldest thou give ever so much of the precious ore to ransom thy life, it would be unavailable ; or, shouldest thou trust in thy strength of body or mind ; shoudlest thou plead the readiness of thy wit, the strength and greatness of thy judgment, memory, and other faculties ;. thy benevolence of disposition ; thy usefulness in life, thy numerous connexions, the great honors that await thee ; wert thou a monarch, and couldest thou command armies and valiant hosts, strong and mighty ; all these things would be totally disregarded by God, if he, provoked by thy rashness, should give thee thy wish, and issue the *death warrant* against thy life ; therefore, considering these things, " Desire not the night (of death, and especially sudden death) when people are cut off in their place ; and there is no remedy, no ransom, no discharge in that war ; from which neither power, wisdom, might, riches, honors, wickedness, nor even virtue, can deliver. " Take heed, regard not iniquity ;" do not sin in any wise, and especially do not rashly wish for death ; which is very presumptuous and heaven daring ; " for this thou hast chosen, rather than affliction :" See Job xxxvi. 18, 19, 20, 21. This is evidently the plain meaning of the text, and is confirmed by Psal. xlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. " They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multi-

tude of their riches ; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ranſom for him : (For the redemption of their ſoul is precious, and it ceaſeth for ever.) That he ſhould ſtill live forever, and not ſee corruption." But, though the power of wealth, wiſdom, and ſtrength, are not ſufficient to buy a ſhort reprieve from death ; yet the power of GOD is able to ranſom therefrom, and to redeem from the grave, or hell, as I have noticed before ; and which is expreſſed in the laſt mentioned Pſalm, in the following terms ; " But GOD will redeem my ſoul from the power of the grave ; for he ſhall receive me," ver. 15. And by the ſame parity of reaſoning, that the power of the HIGHEST is able alſo to redeem or ranſom, the bodies of men from the grave, after they have periſhed there ; he is able alſo to redeem ſouls from ſin and miſery, if it be his pleaſure ; and, by the blood of the MESSIAH'S, covenant, to ſend forth his priſoners out of the pit wherein is no water, not even a drop to cool the tongues of thoſe who are tormented there. I have therefore no doubt, but, the blood of *Chriſt* is able to redeem to the uttermoſt, and is ſufficient to deſtroy the power of ſin, death, and hell. Nothing in the text on which your objection is founded, can depreciate the merit of that cleanſing, all-powerful blood, by proving that it cannot be effectual to loſt ſouls.

*Friend.* But have you forgot that the Scripture ſays, " Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom, in the grave, whither thou goeſt. And if the tree fall toward the ſouth, or toward the north ; in the place where the tree

tree falleth, there it ſhall be ?" Eccleſ. ix. 10. xi. 3.

*Miniſter.* No ; I have not forgot that ſuch paſſages are found in the Bible ; and I believe they were written with a deſign to make us diligent, and wiſely to improve our time and talents ; and that we ſhould be liberal in giving alms, which ſeems eſpecially to be the meaning of the laſt, if we may judge by the connexion in which it is found, and without which I am not able to ſay what it intends : But, in this caſe, they do not appear to me to be any thing to the purpoſe, one way or the other ; and yet no Scriptures are more frequently brought than theſe againſt the doctrine of the Reſtoration of all things ; but commonly accompanied with ſome additions ; ſuch as—" There is no repentance in the grave ; nor pardon offered to the dead."—" And as death leaves us, ſo judgment finds us."—Words that I have never found in the Bible ; but were they repeated ever ſo often, could not affect this argument ; ſince the general Reſtoration cannot happen till long after the laſt Judgment, and will not be wholly compleated till the time of the creation of the new heavens and earth, wherein righteouſneſs alone ſhall dwell.

We all know, that the grave is a place of inactivity, where there is no *work, device, knowledge,* nor *wiſdom ;* and it is a ſtate to which we ſhall ſoon be brought ; and, therefore, we ought to be diligent and induſtrious now : But thoſe who believe in the immortality of the *ſoul,* will not undertake to prove from theſe words, that it has no *knowledge,* or *wiſdom,* after it leaves the body ; ſince many of them ſay, that the ſoul knows much more in one hour after that event takes place, than in the whole period of its exiſtence before. And as for

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thoſe who believe that man dies *wholly*, and ſleeps in the grave until the reſurrection, they can never bring this text with any conſiſtency againſt the final Reſtoration of all men; becauſe, let what will be the ſtate of things in the grave, nothing can prevent our Savior from raiſing all at laſt, and changing them finally for the better, if ſuch be his pleaſure. I might, therefore, juſt as well attempt, from the vii and xiv chapters of Job, to prove, that there ſhall be *no reſurrection of the dead from their graves*, notwithſtanding the numerous promiſes of that grand event; as any perſon to prove, from theſe and ſimilar paſſages, that *all men ſhall not be finally reſtored*; ſince what is ſaid in thoſe chapters ſeems ten times more againſt the *former*, than any thing that can be urged from theſe is againſt the *latter*. The doctrine of the general *reſurrection* of the juſt and unjuſt; and a ſtate of *rewards* for the former, and *puniſhments* for the latter, according to their works; and alſo the *ſubjection*, *final reconciliation*, and *reunion of* ALL *things in* CHRIST, are all expreſsly revealed, and are made the ſubject of prophecies, threatenings, and promiſes; and are all truths, that cannot be overthrown by any reaſonings, as they are plainly declared by GOD himſelf.

The Scripture, in abundance of places, highly recommends liberality; and, in the moſt poſitive manner, aſſures the bounteous, that they ſhall be bleſſed: I need not recite paſſages to prove, what is ſo univerſally known and confeſſed. *Solomon*, therefore, having given may excellent precepts to direct us in other matters, comes to exhort us to be bountiful and liberal, in diſtributing to the neceſſities of others what GOD haſt bleſſed us with-

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al; saying, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall towards the south, or toward the north; in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Thereby intimating to us, that as certainly as these plain common observations are true, (than which nothing can be more so) shall they who bestow liberally upon the poor and needy, be rewarded; since GOD has promised, and he will perform: See, upon this subject, Deut. xv. 10, 11.—Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3. cxii.—Prov. xi. 24, 25, 26. xiv. 31. xix. 17. xxii. 9.—St. Matth. vi. 3, 4, x. 42.—St. Luke vi. 38. xii. 33. xiv. 12, 13, 14.—2 Cor viii. 9.—1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19—and many other places.

*Solomon* then goes on upon the same subject, and intimates to us, by two striking metaphors, that if we wait till no difficulties appear in our way to hinder us from performing our duty, we shall never reap the blessing; and after giving us to understand that GOD has many secret ways of working, far above our comprehension, and can therefore bless and reward us in many ways out of our own sight, or the view of others, and yet no less certainly than children are conceived, nourished, and receive life in the womb, though we know not how; he comes to give us a warm and pressing exhortation, to be constant in doing good to all, according to our power; and to be so far from concluding that to be lost that we thus bestow, that we ought to consider alms as seed sown in a fruitful soil, and should, with patience, wait for the glorious harvest, when, through the

the divine bleſſing, we may expect to reap an hundred fold.

All this is plain and eaſy: But how any text in this beautiful chain, ſhould ever have been thought to have any alluſion to the ſtate of ſouls departed, or brought as a proof that no alteration can take place after death, I cannot conceive. But, allowing it to have any relation at all to a future ſtate, it cannot then in the leaſt diſapprove, that very material changes may happen to ſouls in the ſpiritual world; ſince a tree cut down by its owner, lies not long in the ſame poſition in which it falls, but is applied to various uſes, according to its fitneſs and his pleaſure. But as this is nothing to the purpoſe, I think I have taken too much pains here already; and I ſhould have ſaid little or nothing upon this part of the objection, were it not continually urged, as though the whole controverſy turned and terminated upon this alluſion, than which nothing ſeems farther from the meaning of the text; which, in its true ſenſe, appears to be this—That as certainly as full clouds muſt empty themſelves upon the terraqueous globe, and that every thing is *what it is*, and *where it is*, and no where elſe; and as a tree falling to the ſouth, does not fall and lie to the north; and, *vice verſa*, ſo, with the ſame certainty, ſhall liberality be bleſt and rewarded.

*Friend.* I have nothing to object to what you have ſaid upon the text; it appears natural. I formerly thought it intended, that as perſons were laid in the grave, ſo they ſhould riſe, and that there could be no change after death; but I am fully convinced, that this belongs not to the ſubject. But there is another paſſage, in the book of Eccleſiaſtes,

ſiaſtes, (chap. ix. 4, 5, 6.) that I ſhould be glad to hear your opinion of :——" For to him that is joined to all the living, there is hope ; for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know, that they muſt die ; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward ; for the momory of them is forgotten. Alſo, their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now periſhed ; neither have they any more a portion for ever, in any thing that is done under the ſun."

*Miniſter.* It is evident that the wiſe man, in this and many other of his obſervations, only conſidered things with reſpect to the preſent life, without any regard to a future ſtate. In this view, his declarations are conſiſtent with truth ; but in no other. Let the following ſerve as a ſpecimen :—" No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all ; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked ; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean ; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not ; as is the good, ſo is the ſinner ; and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth an oath," ver. 1, 2.——Nothing could poſſibly be more falſe than theſe obſervations, applied to a future ſtate, though they are generally true in this life ; for if there are no future rewards and puniſhments, no ſtate of retribution hereafter, there is an end to all religion. But he does not finally leave the matter ſo ; but makes a moſt excellent concluſion to this book ; ſaying—

" Let us hear the concluſion of the whole matter : Fear (*or* revere) GOD, and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of man. For GOD

GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil, chap. xii. 13, 14.

Thus, it is plain, that a living dog is better (more useful in this world) than a dead lion; which is no longer capable of doing good or evil; that a man, when he dies, loses all hopes of enjoyment in this life, and is rendered incapable of exercising the functions of it any longer; has no more a portion in any thing belonging thereto. Thus, in fine, all the observations that can be fairly made, upon this and similar passages, belong entirely to the present state of things; and, therefore, do not at all affect the argument, either one way or the other.

*Friend.* This is so plain, that nothing can be more so; but our *Savior's* words (St. John ix 4.) deserve a particular consideration:—"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work;"—which is explained commonly of the night of death, when no more works can be wrought.

*Minister.* Our Lord was diligent in his labor; he constantly went about doing good: he was never idle; he was in haste, till he had finished the work which his father had given him to do. In this he was—as in every thing else—a glorious pattern and example for us! And, O that we might follow him!—Now we may feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; may take in the stranger, relieve the distressed, visit the sick, the fatherless, widows, and prisoners in their affliction; may bury the dead—and constantly perform works of benevolence and mercy, while we remain in this state

ſtate of our exiſtence; which if we here neglect, we never can perform at all, and of conſequence, never obtain the rewards which are promiſed to the obedient; but as it is not the ſtate of rewards and puniſhments that we are now diſcourſing about, but a ſtate beyond—even the Reſtoration of all things; neither is the diſpute about what *men* can do after this life, but what GOD can do, or what he has purpoſed to do with and for them, in the ages to come, after the dreadful ſentence is paſt; whether they ſhall be left under the ſame, *while God exiſts;* or whether they ſhall ever be reſtored; or whether they ſhall be annihilated; this, you know, is the ſtate of the queſtion; ſome hold the *firſt*, and others the *laſt*; but I am apt to think both theſe opinions are extremes, and therefore judge it ſafeſt to maintain the *ſecond*, which I take to be the medium here.

*Friend.* Indeed I am convinced, that no circumſtance preceding the general judgment, can affect the argument; becauſe we are informed, that the condemnation of the wicked ſhall be at that day; then GOD will render to them according to their deeds, and will ſay to them, *Depart from me*, &c. —But the following texts of Scripture form a ſtrong objection to the univerſal Reſtoration, which I would wiſh you well to conſider.

"The expectation of the wicked ſhall periſh; and the hypocrite's hope ſhall periſh: Whoſe hope ſhall be cut off, and whoſe truſt ſhall be a ſpider's web. He ſhall lean upon his houſe, but it ſhall not ſtand; he ſhall hold it faſt, but it ſhall not endure. The heaven ſhall reveal his iniquity, and the earth ſhall riſe up againſt him. The eyes of the wicked ſhall fail, and they ſhall not eſcape;

and their hope ſhall be as the giving up of the ghoſt. His confidence, ſhall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it ſhall bring him to the king of terrors. For what is the hope of the wicked, though he hath gained, when GOD taketh away his ſoul. Will GOD hear his cry, when trouble cometh upon him? He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation ſhall periſh; and the hope of unjuſt men periſheth. Becauſe I have called, and ye have refuſed; I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded: But ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof: I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh: When your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh come upon you: Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of JEHOVAH. They would none of my counſel; they deſpiſed all my reproof. Therefore ſhall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices," Prov. x. 28. Job viii. 13, 14, 15. xx. 27. xi. 20. xviii. 14. xxvii. 8, 9. Prov. xxix. 1. xi. 7. 1. 24—31.

Theſe, and abundance of other ſimilar paſſages, declare the future ſtate of the wicked to be deſperate, without hope; they and their hopes periſh together, as the ſpider's web; they have no hopes or proſpect of being redeemed; they can look for nothing but judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour them as ſtubble fully dry, and as thorns cut up ſhall they be burned in the fire. Solomon ſays,

ſays, "The expectation of the wicked is wrath," Prov. xi. 23. "As he loved curſing, ſo ſhall it come unto him; as he delighted not in bleſſing, ſo ſhall it be far from him. As he cloathed himſelf with curſing, like as with his garment; ſo ſhall it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones," Pſal. cix. 17, 18. Indeed he can have no hopes, when he conſiders that he hath neglected ſo great a ſalvation all his life; that he hath ſet at nought GOD's counſels, deſpiſed his reproofs; that when his CREATOR called to him to turn, he had no ears to hear his voice; and therefore, when ſorrow ſhall overtake, though he may cry, he ſhall not be regarded of God; and though he may ſeek, he ſhall not find; the Maſter of the houſe having riſen up, and ſhut to the door, all knocking for entrance is in vain, even though ſuch were to plead for admittance in the moſt earneſt manner, ſaying, "Lord, Lord, open to us;" he ſhall anſwer, "I know you not whence you are;" and though they may reiterate, and expoſtulate, ſaying, "We have eaten and drank in thy preſence, and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets," he ſhall not be moved, but ſhall ſay to them, "I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth, when they ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themſelves thruſt out." St. Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27, 28. See alſo St. Matth. vii. 21, 22, 23. xxv. 11, 12.

*Miniſter.* Theſe are awful warnings, indeed: and were they attended to as they ought to be, would be ſufficient, one would think, to deter men from their evil ways: I am glad that you have ſtated

ſtated them in this moſt ſtriking point of light; for though they form no real objection to my views of GOD's dealing with men, as I underſtand the Scriptures, they are an inſuperable bar to the opinions of thoſe who deny a future ſtate of retribution, which I think impoſſible for them to anſwer fairly. I ſhall, however, notice briefly, ſome things in this collection of Scriptures, in order that my ſentiments may appear in their true light.

1. All the hopes of the wicked, ungodly, and hypocrites, ſhall periſh at their death.

Perhaps they hoped to have lived long, to have enjoyed health, wealth, pleaſure, and all worldly good, for many years; to have ſeen their children for many generations, flouriſhing for a long time on earth; but death deſtroys theſe hopes.

The hypocrites might have hoped that they ſhould have been accepted with GOD, on the account of their birth, parentage, profeſſion, rank among the people of GOD, obſervation of the externals of religion, &c. &c. all of which vain hopes do certainly periſh at death.

The profane and wicked infidel, and practical atheiſt, might have hoped, either to have ceaſed to exiſt, or to have found ſome way of eſcaping the threatened puniſhment; but death deſtroys theſe hopes alſo.

2. Whatever may be the final intention of GOD towards theſe miſerable creatures, it is evident they are ſhut up in a ſtate of keen tormenting deſpair, or dreadful ſuſpenſe, and may be fully perſuaded that they ſhall never be releaſed, of which it is likely they may not have even the moſt diſtant hope,

hope, or the least degree of knowledge—but, on the contrary, be in fearful expectation of more terrible punishment hereafter.

3. As they have lived and died in sin, their destruction, or misery, is certain—and there is no remedy, that can prevent their experiencing the consequences of their crimes, and suffering the just punishment which shall be inflicted on them, according to their different deserts.

4. They who live and die in rebellion against GOD, will be eternally deprived of the glories and honors of the kingdom of *Christ*, which otherwise they might have possessed; will be excluded from a share in the first resurrection, and will be exposed to suffer the torments of the second death; which all must inevitably suffer, who remain incorrigible till the great day of judgment.

5. As God hath called, and they have refused, it is but reasonable to suppose, that they, in their turn, shall cry in vain; yet nevertheless, though he may long delay, he may hear their cries, and deliver them at last. See Psal. cvii. 13, 14, 15, 16.

David, in Psalm xxxivth says, "The face of JEHOVAH is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Our translators not understanding, or not entertaining an idea of the future Restoration, add, "*The righteous* cry, and JEHOVAH heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Whereas the Holy Ghost has put no such words as *the righteous* into the text there; but after saying, that the face of JEHOVAH is against them that do evil, to destroy them out of the world, and to make them forgotten, and their names to cease upon the earth, it adds,

a word that signifies *crying*, and then says, "And JEHOVAH heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles:" See ver. 16, 37. This seems, indeed, like the doctrine of the Bible, which elsewhere says, speaking of the notoriously wicked; "O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame setteth the mountain on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be confounded, and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish. And they shall know (as the Hebrew word signifies, and as it is rendered in the old translation) "that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth," Psal. lxxxiii. 13—18——Here we see, in a beautiful and clear manner, that one grand design of God in bringing judgments, and even what is called utter destruction, upon men, is that they may know that he is JEHOVAH, the true God; and there are but few intelligent Christians, but must, in some measure, be able to conceive hopes concerning all those to whom the knowledge of God is promised.

Though the threatenings in the prophecy of Ezekiel, both against the Jews and other nations, are uncommonly severe; yet they frequently close with this gracious promise—"And they shall know that I am JEHOVAH"—or something similar; as will evidently appear to those who will be at the pains of examining the following passages in that book.

EZEKIEL, vi. 7, 10, 13, 14. vii. 4, 9, 27. xi. 10, 12. xii. 15, 16, 20. xii. 9, 14, 21, 23. xiv. 8.

xv.

xv. 7. xvi. 62. xx. 12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44, xxii. 16. xxiii. 49. xxiv. 24, 27. xxv, 5, 7, 11, 17. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 22, 23, 24, 26 xxix. 6, 9, 16, 21. xxx. 8, 19, 25, 26 xxxii. 15. xxxiii. 29. xxxiv. 27. xxxv. 4, 9, 12, 15. xxxvi. 11, 23, 38. xxxvii. 6, 13. xxxviii. 23, xxxix. 6, 7, 22, 28.

*Friend.* But does not punishment harden and inflame offenders, instead of softening and humbling them? As we read, Isa. viii. 21. "They shall curse their King and their GOD, and look upward;" and, in Rev. xvi. 9, 10, 11. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of GOD, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory. And they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the GOD of Heaven, because of their pains and their sores; and repented not of their deeds."

*Minister.* Punishment, to a certain degree, inflames and enrages, in a most amazing manner; but continued longer, and heavier, produces a contrary effect—softens, humbles, and subdues. When Ephraim, of old, bemoaned himself, he said thus:—"Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art JEHOVAH, my GOD," Jer. xxxi. 18. The metaphor here used, expresses, in a most lively manner, the different, effects of the same discipline, in its beginning, progress, and end. When a bullock first has the yoke laid on his neck, he frets, tosses, and rages exceedingly; but, by a continuance of the discipline, he is subdued, brought down, humbled, and tamed, so as to become the most useful and gentle

gentle of animals. The ſons of Zion are repreſented as lying "at the head of all the ſtreets, as a wild bull in a net; full of the fury of JEHOVAH, the rebuke of GOD," Iſai. li. 20. A wild bull, in a net, muſt be a furious creature; ſo are men, when firſt they are brought under the Divine correction. But GOD knows how to correct men, in ſuch a manner as to bring them to ſubmit to him, in due time; and though ſome are ſo ſunk in ſin as not to be reformed, by any means, in this life; yet that is no argument, that GOD is not able to ſubdue and bring down the proud and moſt rebelious, in another ſtate, by means that may be uſed effectually there, though they could not be uſed here. GOD ſays, by the prophet to Iſrael, "Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee. So will I make my fury towards thee to reſt, and my jealouſy ſhall depart from thee; and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry," Ezek. xxiv. 13. xvi. 42. Some ſins are ſo daring and preſumptuous, as to provoke GOD to threaten, that they ſhall not be purged away in this life; and, perhaps, their malignancy may be ſo great, that nothing that can be uſed here, is able to ſubdue them: Thus, when GOD threatened his people, of old, with deſtruction, they turned his threatenings into ridicule; inſtead of weeping, mourning, baldneſs, and girding with ſackcloth, to which God called them; there was nothing but "joy and gladneſs, ſlaying oxen, and killing ſheep, eating fleſh and drinking wine: Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. And it was revealed in mine ears, by JEHOVAH of Hoſts, Surely, this iniquity ſhall not be purged

purged from you till ye die, ſaith JEHOVAH, God of Iſrael," Iſai. xxii. 12, 13, 14.

Thus, puniſhments are deſigned for the humbling of the proud; but if they fail of anſwering that purpoſe, as adminiſtered in the preſent ſtate, they will be continued and increaſed in future periods, to ſuch a degree, as ſhall bring all down in due time. Thoſe pains which produced that rage and blaſphemy which you mentioned, were all poured out on hardened ſinners in the preſent life; and were ſo terrible and ſevere as to produce thoſe fearful effects, but not ſufficiently ſo as to produce the contrary.

That puniſhment, to a certain degree, produces rage, but to a certain degree beyond, produces ſubmiſſion; may be illuſtrated by the following fact, as well as many others, of the ſame nature.

In the former war between England and France, there was one Mr. ————————, of Virginia, who was waggon maſter general in the army of the Provincials. He was guilty of abuſing his power, by frequently ſtriking the ſoldiers with his waggon whip. Complaint being made, a court martial was held, and he was ſentenced to receive five hundred laſhes; which ſentence was executed upon him. When firſt he began to feel the laſh, he was exceedingly enraged, and curſed thoſe who had thus ſentenced him; ſwearing, that if he lived to be releaſed, he would kill them all, if poſſible; for that he valued not his life, in the leaſt, but would revenge this diſgrace, by killing them, wherever he found them; and much more, to the ſame purpoſe. But, before he had received half his puniſhment, he declared, that he had not the

leaſt

leaſt diſpoſition to lift his hand againſt them; he ſaw clearly that they had acted right; that he had been entirely to blame; and that his puniſhment was juſt. After his correction was over, he was led quietly away, entirely cured of all his rage; from which he was as much freed by his puniſhment, as ever an effect was produced by a cauſe. He was healed of his wounds, and, I think, reſtored to his poſt.—Some time after the war was over, he was paſſing one day over thoſe mountains in Virginia, commonly called *The Blue Ridge;* and there he met alone one of the men who had condemned him, in the court martial, to ſuch a puniſhment. He put him in mind of it; and told him, that it was now in his power to retaliate upon him. The other acknowledged that he was in his power; but added, "M———, you know you did wrong, and deſerved the puniſhment you received; and if you kill me, I declare, that we did right in ſentencing you to be whipped; I ſhould do the ſame, were it to do again; and ſo would you have done, had you been in my place." Mr. M—— acknowledged the truth of it; and was ſo far from fulfilling his threatenings, that he ſuffered him to go in peace, highly commending him for his conduct. Mr. M—— may be ſtill living; he was a general in the American army during the late war, and acquired great honor, for his valor and good conduct.

This I think is an argument *ad hominem.* I have often obſerved inſtances of the ſame nature, in a leſs degree; and I think it muſt be admitted, that although a certain degree of puniſhment will enflame, harden, and enrage; yet, farther degrees produce quite contrary effects. Nor is puniſh-

mens

ment the only thing in nature that produces contrary effects, according to the quantity uſed; almoſt all things do the ſame. Thus, water, with a little ſalt in it, will cauſe putrefaction, much ſooner than perfectly freſh water; but let it be ſaturated with ſalt, and it will preſerve bodies that are caſt therein. A little ſalt caſt on the earth is good manure, and cauſes fruitfulneſs; but a greater quantity produces the contrary effect, by cauſing barrenneſs. A little wine refreſhes, cheers, invigorates; but, taken to exceſs, ſtupifies and intoxicates. And, to mention no more inſtances, a little ſmattering of knowledge puffs up the mind; but a greater degree, humbles and brings it down: From whence,

"*Drink deep, or never taſte the ſpring.*"

*Friend.* But let me aſk you: When you view the miſerable ſtate of fallen men, the inveterate obſtinacy of their wills, the total averſion that many have to God and goodneſs, their confirmed habits of evil, their amazing love of vice, their oppoſition to every method taken to reclaim them, and a thouſand other dreadful circumſtances, which you muſt have obſerved; are you not ready to deſpair of their recovery? not for any want of goodneſs in God, but through their total incapacity of ever being made better.

*Miniſter.* I muſt confeſs, this objection has great weight; and I have often been ready to give up my own ſalvation, on account of the evils of my own heart, which ſometimes riſe, and prevail in ſuch a manner, as almoſt drives me to deſpair; and I can find no relief, but by flying to *Jeſus*, as my

my only refuge, and trusting in his promises: And the case is the same with respect to the Restoration of all men. My weak reason tells me, that it cannot be; that it is absolutely impossible, that such hardened rebels can be so changed to eternity, as to become willing and obedient subjects; but when faith prevails, it informs me, that the things which are impossible with men, are possible with GOD; that nothing is too hard for JEHOVAH; and that he hath said—"Behold I am JEHOVAH, the the GOD of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for me?" Jer. xxxii. 27. And the example of Abraham has often proved a great support to me in this case; "who, against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be; and being not weak in faith, he considered not" the impediments, which, to the eye of reason, rendered the accomplishment of the promises improbable, if not impossible. "He staggered not at the promise of GOD, through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD: And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform," Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20, 21.

This is the only way I answer this objection to my own satisfaction—GOD hath sworn, that to him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, Isai. xlv. 24.—That in the name of *Jesus*, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess, that *Jesus Christ* is Lord, to the glory of *God* the *Father*, Phil. ii. 10, 11. That it is the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure

pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of the times, to gather together, or rehead, in one, all things in *Chriſt*; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him, Epheſ. i. 9, 10—And having made peace through the blood of his croſs, he is determined to reconcile all things unto himſelf; whether things in heaven, or things on earth, Col. i. 20.—That he worketh all things after the counſel of his own will, Epheſ. i. 11.—That he will have all men to be ſaved, or reſtored, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 6.—That the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands, St. John iii. 35.—And that *Chriſt* hath ſaid, "All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out," St. John vi. 37.—When I conſider theſe, and many ſuch like promiſes, which I find in the Scriptures; and that he that hath promiſed, is able to perform; hath wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, ſufficient to accompliſh all his words, how difficult or impoſſible ſoever the matter may ſeem, to our carnal, vain, and weak reaſoning; I caſt the whole of my concern upon him; judging, that he is faithful who hath promiſed, and that, in his own time he will fulfil all his purpoſes, and all his promiſes. But I confeſs to you, that it requires a faith, if poſſible, more ſtrong than that of Abraham, to believe the doctrine of the Reſtoration ſtedfaſtly, in the midſt of ſo much evil as prevails in the world, and which ſeems to render it impoſſible: But my only hope is in GOD.

But, to encourage us the more, there are not only promiſes of what GOD will do, but examples

of what he hath done, recorded in Scripture, as the cafes of *Manaffeh*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Mary Magdalen*, *Saul*, and many of the murderers of our Lord, prieſts, and even Phariſees, are left on record, as patterns of GOD's longſuffering, power, mercy, and love.—And I would adviſe thoſe Chriſtians that doubt of the Univerſal Reconciliation of all things, to remember St. Paul's words to the Coloſſians, on this ſubject, chap. i. 21. "And you that were ſome time alienated, and enemies in your mind, by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled;" as a proof and example of his power to reconcile all things. Let all remember their own ſtubbornneſs; and then, inſtead of reviling and deriding a truth which GOD has revealed, they will adore him, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doeſt thou?" Rom. xi. 36. Dan. iv. 35.

*Friend.* But allowing that God has power to change the hearts of the vileſt of men, is not the exerciſe of that power evidently limited? For I find it written in Rev. xxii. 11.—"He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill; and he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill." By theſe words it ſeems to be intimated, that the characters of both the wicked and the righteous, ſhall at ſome period be ſo confirmed and fixed, as to admit of no change or alteration.

*Miniſter.* This appears to be a conſiderable difficulty, but can by no means overthrow the ſyſtem

of

of the Restoration, which seems established upon many gracious promises. The words seem to refer to a particular period, even when the Lord shall come, and shew that his coming will not, (as some suppose) change the characters of men; but that all shall continue, for a certain time, in the same character as before. But, though "he that is unjust, shall be unjust still; and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still"—during the age of judgment; and shall have the dreadful curse pronounced upon him; for, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, Maranatha; that is, Accursed, the Lord cometh: 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Yet I trust that I have proved, that the vilest shall be finally changed; and consequently, that these words must be understood with some limitation. And thus though this text is plainly contrary to the opinion of those who suppose that all the human race shall be admitted into the kingdom of heaven at the day of judgment, yet it may be well reconciled to the system laid down in these Dialogues; especially if it can be proved that similar expressions are used, where a limitation is supposed, or necessarily implied.

*Friend.* Yes; if you can find similar expressions used for limited times, it will be satisfactory.

*Minister.* St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiv. 38. "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant:" But we can hardly suppose that he meant without limitation. So we read of the Jews, that "GOD hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day." And David saith;—— "Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them.

Let

Let their eyes be darkened that they ſhould not ſee, and bow down their back ALWAY," Rom. xi. 8, 9, 10. Theſe expreſſions of their remaining in a blinded, hardened, and reprobate ſtate, are ſtronger than thoſe—"He that is unjuſt let him be unjuſt ſtill, &c. for, inſtead of *ſtill*, the word *always* is uſed; and yet we are informed, that this "blindneſs in part has (only) happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in: And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved." And that "GOD hath concluded them all *(or*, ſhut them up together) in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," even all whom he had ſhut up, or concluded in unbelief. And, as I obſerved before, David ſays; "Fill their faces with ſhame, that they may ſeek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to ſhame, and periſh: That *they* may know that thou whoſe name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Moſt High over all the earth," Pſal. lxxxiii. 16, 17, 18. Many other ſimilar paſſages might be mentioned; but theſe may ſuffice, to ſhew, that often where the words *Let it*, or *Let them be*, in ſuch and ſuch a ſtate, they only intend a certain period, until another diſpenſation takes place. As for righteouſneſs, holineſs, and happineſs, they have quite a different foundation from ſin and impurity, as I have ſhewn before; and therefore, no arguments uſed in favor of the total deſtruction of evil, can, in the leaſt, prove, that goodneſs, which is the Divine eſſence, ſhall ceaſe; but the contrary; and thoſe who are firmly joined to the LORD, and have continued with him through the ſtate of temptation, ſhall never ceaſe to be righteous, nor be ſeparated from their Head, from whom they ſhall derive eternal

eternal life; for CHRIST hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." St. John xiv. 19.

CHRIST, at his coming, will bring every hidden thing to light, and shall take off all disguises; so that he that is unjust, shall appear unjust; and he that is filthy, shall be discovered; hypocrisy shall be no more. "The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful," Isai. xxxii. 5. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; and between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not," Mal. iii. 18. The judgment of God is according to truth, and is designed to make an entire discovery of all persons, and all secret things, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," Rom. iii. 19. But though judgment has its great use in discovering, laying open, convincing, and condemning; and punishment in destroying, subduing, and humbling; yet the powerful, saving grace of GOD, and the operation of the divine Spirit, must have the glory of restoring, or creating men anew; and the blood of JESUS must cleanse their souls from the guilt and pollution of sin. Evil must be destroyed out of them; this is done by afflictions; and goodness must be restored; this is done by God's renewing power and grace.

But the objection may be answered another way, without any of this reasoning by considering the subject comparatively. Thus: As God only is holy; as none are good but he, in an absolute sense; as he putteth no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not clean in his sight, and his angels he charged with folly; (See Job xv. 15. iv. 18.)

18.) and as all intelligences, compared with him, are unjuſt and unclean ; ſo, thoſe who have lived and died in rebellion againſt God, and in the pollution of ſin, may remain unjuſt and filthy, compared with the ſaints, thoſe veſſels of honor and glory, who have purged themſelves. "But in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and ſilver, but alſo of wood, and of earth ; and ſome to honor and ſome to diſhonor. If a man, therefore, purge himſelf from theſe (ſins) he ſhall be a veſſel of honor, ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe, and prepared unto every good work," 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. Here we may obſerve, that in our Lord's great houſe there ſhall be divers veſſels of various kinds, yet all uſeful, but ſome more highly ſo than others ; that honor and diſhonor are comparative terms ; and that the way to become veſſels of the higheſt honor at laſt, is to purge ourſelves from iniquity while on earth, by obeying the truth. For it muſt appear evident, from the nature of things, that there will always be an immenſe difference between thoſe who ſhall be kings and prieſts to God, and thoſe who ſhall be ſubdued in the ages to come, ſo as to be ſubjects, but who ſhall not attain to that honor and glory, which they ſhall have who ſuffer with Chriſt here, and ſhall be glorified with him hereafter.

*Friend.* Since I have converſed with you I muſt acknowledge that many things have appeared in a different light from what they did before ; and if I do not wholly embrace the doctrine of the Reſtoration, I muſt allow that there is much more to be ſaid for it than I could have imagined. But I have ſtill ſome difficulties that I wiſh to propoſe.

There

There is a terrible threatening, which is indeed the laſt in the Bible, that I ſhould be glad to hear your thoughts upon, which is thus expreſſed, (Rev. xxii. 18, 19) "For I teſtify unto every man, that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, GOD ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book:" But I can almoſt foreſee how you will anſwer this; that though the plagues that are written in this book, ſhall be added, yet mercy ſhall finally rejoice againſt judgment; and though a man's part may be taken out of the book of life, and he, in conſequence, ſuffer the torments of the ſecond death; yet, as the time will come, when there ſhall be no more death of any kind, neither ſorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; his Reſtoration may be certainly inferred; and though his part in the heavenly city may be forfeited, ſo that he may never become one of thoſe who ſhall reign therein, nor yet have a conſtant dwelling there; he may, nevertheleſs, enter as a worſhipper, and a ſubject of the great King; and may drink of the water of life; feed on the fruits of the tree of life, and be healed by its leaves; and be one of the happy inhabitants of the new earth, which God will create.

*Miniſter.* Yes, my friend: But though this Scripture may be eaſily reconciled to the plan laid down in theſe dialogues; it contains ſuch threatenings as are very terrible indeed; and ſhould make us exceeding careful not to contradict what God hath

hath here revealed, by adding vain interpretations of our own, contrary to the ſenſe of the text; nor in any wiſe to explain away, or weaken, the force of either the threatenings or promiſes, ſet forth in this wondrous book. The amazing torments which they ſhall feel that have theſe plagues added to them, and the dreadful loſs which they ſhall ſuſtain that have their part taken out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, cannot be even conceived: And it being poſſible to forfeit this glorious portion entirely, and for ever, made St. Paul warn the Hebrews in ſuch a ſolemn manner as he doth throughout the whole epiſtle—Oh, what affecting advice is the following!—"Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of the grace of God; leſt any root of bitterneſs, ſpringing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: Leſt there be any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau; who, for one morſel of meat, ſold his birthright. For ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully, with tears," Heb. xii. 15, 16, 17.

"Poor Eſau repented too late,
That once he his birthright deſpiſ'd;
And ſold for a morſel of meat,
What could not too highly be priz'd.

"How great was his anguiſh, when told,
The bleſſing he ſought to obtain
Was gone, with the birthright he ſold;
And none could recal it again!

Thus,

Thus, though Eſau, as well as Jacob, was bleſſed concerning things to come; (See Heb. xi. 20) yet the birthright, and the particular bleſſings connected therewith, he loſt forever: And ſo it is poſſible that we may loſe our parts in the holy city, or no ſuch threatenings would ever have been made.—For it is a maxim with me—That God never warns, where there is no danger to fear; and never encourages us to hope, where there is no poſſibility of obtaining.

As the glorious and univerſal deliverance of all men from the bondage of ſin, and their obtaining an inheritance in the new earth, was clearly pointed out by the great year of Jubilee, under the law; in which every ſervant went out free, and every man returned to his poſſeſſion, and to his family; (See Lev. xxv. 10.) So, the poſſibility of being cut off from the holy city, for ever, was pointed out by that notable exception, ver. 29, 30.—"And if a man ſell a dwellinghouſe in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is ſold; within a full year, may he redeem it. And if it be not redeemed within the ſpace of a full year, then the houſe that is in the walled city ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generations; it ſhall not go out in the Jubilee."

Something ſimilar to this may be found in Rev. iii. 11.—"Behold, I come quickly; hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown:" And the 5th verſe is alſo worthy of conſideration—"He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his angels."

gels."—O, what promiſes are made to overcomers! That they ſhall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of GOD; ſhall have a crown of life; and ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death; ſhall eat of the hidden manna; ſhall have a white ſtone, and a new name, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth it; ſhall have power over the nations, &c. even as Chriſt received of the Father; ſhall walk with him in white; ſhall be eſteemed worthy to be companions and friends of God; ſhall be clothed in white; ſhall have their names enrolled among the followers of the Lamb, as called, choſen, and faithful; ſhall be confeſſed by the Son of God, before his Father, and the holy angels; ſhall be made pillars in the temple of God, and ſhall go no more out; ſhall have the name of GOD written upon their foreheads, and the name of the holy city, New Jeruſalem and Chriſt's new, heavenly name; ſhall ſit with him upon his throne, even as he overcame, and is ſet down with the Father, upon his throne; ſhall inherit all things; ſhall be called the ſons of GOD; See Rev. ii. 7, 10, 11, 17, 26, 27. iii. 4, 5, 12, 21. xvii. 14 xxi. 7.

The apoſtle aſſures us, that "If (we are) children, then (we are) heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt; if ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that we may be alſo glorified together." And then adds—"For I reckon that the ſufferings of the preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us," Rom. viii. 17, 18. "When Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear; then ſhall ye (his ſaints) alſo appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4, "We know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him;

him ; for we ſhall ſee him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. But let none of thoſe who believe themſelves the heirs of this kingdom,&c. dare to indulge themſelves in ſin, under a notion that God can never caſt them off ; as ſome do.

A Preacher whom I once knew, encouraged this wickedly preſumptuous diſpoſition ſo far, as, openly to ſay : " God cannot damn me : He can as ſoon ceaſe to be God, as he can caſt me off ; even though I ſhould ſin ever ſo much. If I ſhould kill a man, he could not damn me ; nay, if I ſhould kill all the men in the world, he cannot damn me." —This man was rigid in trifles, religiouſly ſcrupulous in frivolous things, ſuch as *dreſs*, *&c.* yet he made traffic of the human kind, engaged in war, and performed acts of cruelty and outrage with as little tenderneſs as may be imagined ! He long bloated himſelf with the notion of God's peculiar favor—but, near the cloſe of his life, the diſpleaſure of the Almighty coming viſibly upon him, the *rhapſodiſt* changed his tone, and exclaimed, that God had forſaken him !

I would adviſe all men, of that bold, preſuming, ſelfconfident ſpirit, to read and conſider well thoſe words, in Jer. xxii. 24. " As I live, ſaith JEHOVAH, though *Coniah*, the ſon of *Jehoiakim*, king of Judah, were the ſignet upon my right hand ; yet would I pluck thee thence."

Conſider, firſt, who ſpeaks, JEHOVAH : He not only ſpeaks, but he confirms his threatening with an oath ; and becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf, by his own life ; " As I live, ſaith JEHOVAH, though *Coniah*, the ſon of *Jehoiakim*, king of Judah ;" though he is of the family of *David*, with whom I have made an everlaſting

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ing covenant, ordered in all things, and ſure; and though he is anointed king over my people; I will not ſpare him; yea, though he "were the ſignet upon my right hand; yet would I pluck thee thence." Signets, upon the hands of ancient Perſian monarchs, were thoſe ſeals with which their decrees were ſealed and confirmed; ſo that no man could reverſe them. Now, God declares, that if this man was ever ſo dear, and as neceſſary, to him, as the ſignet on the right hand of a king is to its owner; that though he was not able to govern his kingdom without his aſſiſtance; though he had been the deareſt and moſt uſeful thing; he would entirely caſt him off, for his tranſgreſſions. And how much more ſo, if it be conſidered, that no man is neceſſary to God; that man cannot be profitable to him; that neither our wickedneſs can hurt him, nor our righteouſneſs benefit him: (See Job xxii. 2, 3. xxxv. 6, 7, 8. Pſal. xvi. 2, 3) And that he threatens to puniſh the only family that he had known on earth, for all their iniquities, Amos iii. 2. What have not thoſe to fear, who have been placed in high ſtations, entruſted with precious treaſures, great abilities, opportunities, &c. and have abuſed them!——Let ſuch read, and ſeriouſly conſider, St. Luke xii. 42—48. St. Matth. xxiv. 45—15. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22.

*Friend.* Theſe conſiderations are, on one hand, glorious and ſublime, beyond conception; and, on the other, terrible beyond deſcription. But ſome ſay, That if they are only admitted into the kingdom of God, and are not caſt into the lake of fire, it is the higheſt of their ambition; that they never aſpire to be kings and prieſts; nor to obtain

a crown

a crown, throne, ſceptre, &c. And others ſay, That if they are ever, to all eternity, to be delivered from their miſery that it is a matter of little conſequence to them whether they are followers of Chriſt here, or not.

*Miniſter.* Theſe kind of reflections are frequently thrown out by the enemies of the Reſtoration, to caſt an odium upon the doctrine: But if they were to hear a man ſay; "If I am juſt ſuffered to enter into this kingdom, and am not condemned as a rebel, it is all I wiſh; I deſire neither the riches, honors, pleaſures, conveniences, nor even the neceſſaries, that many of the inhabitants enjoy; all I aſk is to be exempted from the pain and ſhame of public puniſhment:" And another was to add—"I can ſee little or no difference between being made heir apparent to the crown, poſſeſſing all the privileges, honors, dignities, &c. of a prince of the blood; and being hanged, drawn, and quartered, for high treaſon; ſince even the puniſhment, painful and ſhameful as it is, muſt come to an end:" I aſk, Would they not eſteem both theſe men in a ſtate of inſanity, or worſe; entirely devoid of all ſenſe and reaſon? Yet, this unreaſonable language, is not worthy to be named in the ſame day with that which you mentioned. The difference is ſo great I cannot find language to expreſs it. I therefore conſider all ſuch perſons as madmen, with whom it is not worth while to reaſon; who underſtand not what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.

*Friend.* So they appear to me. But the ſyſtem you have laid down, appears equally calculated to check preſumption and deſpair, and to cure all ſuch ſpiritual madneſs; provided that they will attend

tend to it.—But, what will you say to the doctrine of *annihilation? That* may not be liable to the same objections as *endless damnation;* and so the wicked may be punished with *everlasting destruction*, and destroyed, soul and body, in hell; and yet, at last, all beings that are in existence may be made happy. The Scripture seems, in many places, to favor this idea; and the works of nature seem to confirm it. For instance; many fruits and animals perish, before they arrive at perfection; and why may it not be so with the souls and bodies of men? They are no where said to be raised to incorruption, or immortality; but to be destroyed, to be cast into the lake of fire, to be burnt up, root and branch; to be consumed, devoured, burnt up as chaff, thorns, &c. I need not mention particular texts; because the general part of the threatenings in the Scriptures run in that style. And I have sometimes of late reasoned with myself, that the second death must end either in the restoration on annihilation of those who were cast therein; for there seemed something in *endless misery*, that surpassed my belief, at times. But I could not satisfy myself, whether the wicked would be finally restored to some degree of happiness, or totally destroyed; and was apt to think the latter, as it seemed a strange figure of speech to call *destruction*, Restoration.—Pray, have you ever thought upon this matter?

*Minister.* There are but three possible things that can befal those who are cast into the second death; either *endless misery*, *total annihilation*, or *Restoration*; a fourth cannot be thought upon; and but one of these can be true. Now, where there are only three possibilities, of which only one

one *can* be true, and one *muſt* be true; there are theſe two ways of diſcovering the truth: Firſt, if two of the propoſitions are proved to be abſurd, the third muſt ſtand; 2dly, if one be proved true, the others muſt fall to the ground of conſequence. I have taken the ſecond method; and having ſhewed that the doctrine of the Reſtoration is not abſurd, and therefore that it is true; conſequently, the others are falſe.—But, beſides this way of arguing, there are three circumſtances which prove to my ſatisfaction, that *annihilation* is not a truth.

1. That at the very time that the wicked are deſtroyed, they are ſaid to be tormented with fire and brimſtone; and that they have no reſt, day nor night; and the continuance of this is for no ſhort time, (as would probably be the caſe, if the intention of God was only to deſtroy them out of being) but for the age of ages. Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

2. They are put to ſhame and periſh, that they may know the Lord; as I have noticed before: See Pſal. xxxiv. 16, 17. lxxxiii. 16, 17, 18—and the obſervations I have made upon theſe paſſages in the dialogues.

3. But that on which I dare venture the whole cauſe, is, that God hath abſolutely promiſed to reſtore and bring again thoſe whom he hath utterly deſtroyed.

*Friend.* Can you prove that? For if you can, it will ſettle the whole controverſy.

*Miniſter.* I truſt I can, in many inſtances: But I will fix upon one that is full to the purpoſe, and unexceptionable; and that is the caſe of *Sodom*, and her daughters, *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, and *Zeboim*; who,

who, "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude 7.

As they are set forth for an example in their punishment, so also in their restoration: For we may certainly argue, that if any of the human race shall be annihilated, the inhabitants of *Sodom*, *Gomorrah*, &c. will be; as they were condemned with an overthrow, and made an example to those who should after live ungodly. 2 Pet. ii. 6. But these wicked nations shall have their captavity returned; shall return to their former estate; and shall be received by *Jerusalem*, as daughters in the everlasting covenant: *Jerusalem* and her daughters, more wicked themselves, than *Sodom* and her daughters, shall be restored at the same time; shall remember their ways and be ashamed; shall never open mouth any more to glory over the meanest of mankind; when the great JEHOVAH shall be pacified towards *Jerusalem*, for all that she has done, and towards *Sodom* and *Samaria*, for all that they have done also, inasmuch as they shall return from their long captivity, and be given to *Jerusalem* for daughters: See Ezek. xvi. 53, 55, 61, 63.

Now, by Sodom and her daughters being returned from their long and dreadful captivity, we must understand one of three things; either, first, the return of their descendants; or, secondly, the restoration of the land whereon the cities stood; or, lastly, the restoration of those very persons who were destroyed.

It cannot be the first; for there are none of their descendants remaining on earth; all were destroyed.

ed by fire and brimstone; none of the inhabitants escaped, Lot and his daughters excepted; who were only sojourners, and were descendants of Terah and relations to Abraham.

As it cannot be the first, let us try the second. A very ingenious gentleman supposes, that in the time of the Millenium, the Dead Sea shall be turned into land, and shall again become a beautiful well watered plain, and be given to the posterity of *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*: For he argues, and seemingly very justly, that as God promised *Abraham* all the land which he could see from the place where he then stood; (See Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 16, 17) and as the plain of *Sodom* was in sight, it was included in the grant; and, though the Dead Sea now occupies the place where those cities stood; yet God's promise cannot fail; and, therefore, in the Millenium, the Dead Sea shall be swallowed up, and the place shall become a fruitful plain. But whoever will read Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, may plainly see, that the waters that shall issue out from under the threshold of the holy house, shall be brought into the Dead Sea; and shall so heal those deadly waters, that they shall become fruitful, and bring forth fish in great abundance; exceeding many, like the great sea, which is now called the *Mediterranean*; which fish shall be more useful for food, to the innumerable inhabitants that shall then be in that happy country, than all the vegetables that would grow there, even though the whole place was turned into a fruitful garden.

*Friend.* But are you certain, that by *the sea*, is meant *the Dead Sea*, or *Lake of Sodom?*

*Miniſter.* Yes. 1. Becauſe all the other waters in thoſe parts, produce great plenty of excellent fiſh; and therefore, need not healing. 2. Becauſe fiſhers ſhall ſtand upon the banks of the ſea, from Engedi even unto Eneglaim, places that are well known to be contiguous to the Dead Sea; one of which is nearly at the northeaſt corner, the other at the weſt end of the ſame. 3. The marſhes, and the miry places thereof, ſhall not be healed; but ſhall be given to ſalt, as ſpecimens of what the whole is at this time; which barren and deadly ſpots ſhall remain, as ſtanding evidences of the truth of Scripture, and the exact fulfilment of prophecy.

Thus, as *Sodom* cannot be reſtored in her poſterity, there being none remaining on earth; neither ſhall the Dead Sea be turned into land, in the Millenium; it follows, as the only remaining ſenſe of the return of *Sodom's* captivity, that thoſe very inhabitants, who were deſtroyed by fire and brimſtone from heaven, ſhall he reſtored to a ſtate of felicity: And thus, both the doctrine of *annihilation* and *endleſs damnation*, fall to the ground at once.

*Friend.* But as it is the ſecond death, after the day of judgment, that is to deſtroy the bodies and ſouls of the wicked in hell; perhaps, the inhabitants of *Sodom*, *Samaria*, and *Jeruſalem*, may be reſtored before that period, and may not be caſt into the lake of fire.

*Miniſter.* It is evident by our *Savior's* words, (for we muſt not contradict any part of the Scriptures) that this will not be the caſe; for he ſaith, That it ſhall be more tolerable for the land (*that is*, the inhabitants) of *Sodom*, in the day of judgment, than

than for the cities where his goſpel was preached, and his miracles wrought, and yet the inhabitants remained impenitent: See St. Matth. xi. 24. x. 15. St. Mark, vi. 11. St. Luke, x. 12. From all which paſſages it is evident, that the inhabitants of *Sodom* will be condemned in the day of judgment, and puniſhed in the lake of fire; and though their miſery will not be ſo great as that of the inhabitants of the cities where our Savior preached, and performed his mighty works; yet they will be miſerable in that day; and, conſequently, the return of their captivity is not to be expected, till after the creation of the new earth. Therefore, it is plain, that the lake of fire is not deſigned to annihilate thoſe who are caſt therein; ſince all that are not found written in the book of life, at the day of judgment, will be caſt into the lake of fire. They whoſe names are in the book of life, will be happy. The inhabitants of *Sodom* will be miſerable, in ſome degree; therefore, will not be found written in the book of life; conſequently, will be caſt into the lake of fire. They will be reſtored; their captivity ſhall be returned; therefore the lake of fire ſhall not annihilate them. They are ſet forth for an example in their puniſhment; and conſequently, in their Reſtoration.—I need not purſue this argument farther: It appears evident to me; and, till it be fairly anſwered, I ſhall add nothing more.

*Friend.* I lately read a ſermon written by one Mr. B———, in which the writer brings many ſtrong reaſons for the eternity of Hell torments, moſt of which have already been mentioned and anſwered in theſe Dialogues; but he makes uſe of one which has not yet been brought under

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our conſideration, which is, That the damned are under the neceſſity of conſtantly committing freſh ſin, and therefore as they will always continue to ſin againſt God, ſo of neceſſity their puniſhment can never ceaſe. Have you ever thought of this?

*Miniſter.* Yes, I have frequently heard it mentioned, but as it appears totally void of all foundation in the Scripture, it hardly deſerves any notice. The objections that I feel myſelf concerned to treat with ſerioufneſs and reſpect, and candidly to anſwer, are thoſe which appear to be drawn from the book of divine Revelation; but if I muſt attend to all thoſe which the ingenuity of men might raiſe againſt the doctrine of the Reſtoration, I ſhould not only have a very hard taſk, but ſhould never know when I had done, and beſides the diſcourſe would dwindle into trifling and conjectures, very unſuitable to the nature and importance of ſuch an awful ſerious ſubject. I muſt obſerve, that this objection is nothing but a raſh ungrounded aſſertion, or bold conjecture, without the leaſt foundation either in Scripture or reaſon, and if I was to aſſert juſt the contrary, I cannot ſee why my aſſertion would not be a ſufficient anſwer. Nevertheleſs, leſt it ſhould be thought that any objection can be raiſed, that cannot be fairly anſwered, and that I knowing the ſtrength of this, would willingly evade it, I will ſay a few words upon it. The Scriptures univerſally hold forth the idea, that men will be judged, condemned, and puniſhed according to the deeds done in the body. God will render to every man according to his deeds," Rom. ii. 6. "For we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the

the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10.

"And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes," St. Luke, xii. 47, 48. These, and all the passages that speak of future punishment, constantly hold it forth as a just retribution for the evil deeds done in this life; but never intimate any thing of what this objection holds forth, of punishment being continued *ad infinitum* for crimes committed hereafter. Besides, it is plain that punishments or corrections are intended to stop men from sinning, and under the divine agency to take away their sins. "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin," Isai. xxvii. 9. This is universally allowed to be the design of troubles and sorrows in the present life, and why not in the next state also? the Scripture says nothing to forbid this idea, but much to encourage it; particularly that awful passage where the prophet says, And it was revealed in mine ears by JEHOVAH of Hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, TILL YE DIE, saith the Lord God of hosts," Isai. xxii. 14. If then iniquity shall be purged away after death, it is certain that men shall not always continue to sin in a future state, for they must cease to commit iniquity, before it can be purged away. And though their punishments may at first cause them to rage, (as we see is frequently the case in this world) yet shall they continue until the most stubborn shall be entirely subdued and humbled.

*Friend.*

*Friend.* There is another argument of this same kind, viz. that is not founded upon any particular text of Scripture, which is directly contrary to the one you have been answering, which I have formerly thought unanswerable in favor of the doctrine of endless punishment, which is the *infinity* of sin, being against an infinite object, containing infinite hatefulness, and justly therefore deserving infinite punishment. Sin is a crime of infinite magnitude, because God is a Being of infinite majesty and perfection. Every crime justly demerits punishment proportioned to its malignity! and consequently every offence against God demerits infinite punishment. No mere creature can ever suffer an infinity of punishment in any limited duration. It follows therefore, that a sinner deserves to be *eternally* punished. Farther, every man is under infinite obligations to devote himself to the service of God, his infinitely glorious Creator, Preserver and Benefactor. To violate an infinite obligation is to commit a crime of infinite malignity. A crime of infinite malignity, deserves infinite punishment. Can it ever be proved then that everlasting, or *endless punishment* is not the proper desert of a life of sin? I have often said, That this argument trite and common as it is, never was, nor ever would be fairly answered; nevertheless, I am willing to hear what you have to say upon it.

*Minister.* As this argument is often urged, as of the greatest weight, and as you have stated it in its greatest possible force, I shall endeavor to answer it fairly, and particularly.

If sin is *infinite*, then we must ascribe to it one of the perfections of the Deity, which strikes me as something absurd, if not something worse; *sin*, a *privation*,

a *privation*, an *act of a worm, infinite?* Actions must, in my opinion take their denomination from the actors, and not from the objects. Infinite actions, or actions of infinite magnitude require infinite power to perform them. If sin is of infinite magnitude, goodness is more so, as deriving a power from God to the performance of it. But if you grant that David spoke in the name of the Mediator in Psalm xvi. you may be at once furnished with a proof, that even goodness, in the highest state in which it ever was exhibited in the world, was not considered as of infinite magnitude by the great performer. "Thou hast said unto *Jehovah*, Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee. But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight," Ver. 2, 3. If acts of goodness were of infinite magnitude they must extend to God, but the speaker, in these words, be he who he may, David or Christ, was careful to let us know that he did not conceive his acts of goodness infinite. And if acts of goodness are not infinite, it would be highly absurd to call evil actions infinite, which proceed wholly from the creature.

I grant indeed that there is a passage of Scripture which mentions the word *infinite* as belonging to sin and iniquity, but then it is mentioned in such a connexion as shews it to be used as Josephus frequently mentions it, for a very great multitude. And thus it is used by many good authors, who certainly do not mean to use it in the first and proper sense of the word. The Sacred Writer, in the passage alluded to, takes particular care to guard us against any such idea, as though sin was

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of infinite magnitude, or even virtuous and righteous actions, which approach far nearer to infinity, as having their ſource from the fountain of infinite goodneſs. For Eliphaz ſays, "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wiſe may be profitable unto himſelf? Is it any pleaſure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makeſt thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgment? Is not thy wickedneſs great? And thine iniquities infinite?" Job xxii. 2—5. And language very ſimilar to the above is uſed by Elihu, "If thou ſinneſt, what doeſt thou againſt him? Or if thy tranſgreſſions be multiplied, what doſt thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedneſs may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteouſneſs may profit the ſon of man," Job xxxv. 6, 7, 8.

Theſe expreſſions, if they teach any thing, I ſhould think expreſsly declare, that no actions of men can by any means be of *infinite* magnitude, in the ſenſe in which we commonly underſtand that word; though their numbers and magnitudes may be ſo great as to be ſtiled *infinite*, as the word is ſometimes uſed.

You aſſert, in conſequence of your ideas of *infinite* ſin, that *every* offence againſt God demerits infinite puniſhment. If the caſe be ſo, does it not tend entirely to take away the diſtinction which God hath made between ſins of infirmity and ſins of malice, ſins of ignorance and ſins of wilfulneſs, leſſer and greater ſins? All ſins are offences againſt God, and if *every* offence againſt God is of *infinite magnitude*, how can any be greater? and thus the diſtinctions

diſtinctions are entirely deſtroyed, and, all ſins will be eſteemed equal, contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures.

If every offence againſt God demerits infinite puniſhment, then it will follow, that God cannot render to any according to their ways, nor puniſh them as their iniquities deſerve, unleſs they are doomed to *endleſs miſery;* what then will become of all thoſe threatenings where God threatens to puniſh people for all their iniquities, and yet to ſhew favor to them afterwards? This is impoſſible upon your plan, for none can ever receive all the puniſhment due to their ſins during numberleſs ages. Yet if the word of God be true, he can deal with tranſgreſſors as they have done, and yet be gracious to them afterwards. "For thus ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH, I will even deal with thee as thou haſt done, which haſt deſpiſed the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheleſs, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting covenant.—That thou mayeſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou haſt done, ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH," Ezek. xvi. 59, 60, 63.

Here is an inſtance to the purpoſe, of thoſe whoſe ſins were of the deepeſt die, and to whom God threatens to deal as they had done, and to puniſh them for all their numerous and aggravated tranſgreſſions, and yet to remember mercy for them afterwards, and to be pacified towards them for all that they had done. All which things would be abſolutely impoſſible, according to your ideas. In many other parts of Scripture God promiſes to

render to tranſgreſſors according to their works and ways, and yet to be afterwards gracious unto them. And in one place, at leaſt, where God is declaring the great mercies which he will manifeſt unto the children of Iſrael, in returning them to their own land, and cauſing them to dwell ſafely therein, he ſays, "And firſt, I will recompenſe their iniquity, and their ſin *double*; Becauſe they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcaſes of their deteſtable and abominable things," Jer. xvi. 18. What do you think of this? If every offence is of infinite magnitude, and deſerves infinite puniſhment, which can never be fully executed, then how can God puniſh a people for *all* their iniquities, and *do* to the greateſt ſinners *as* they have *done*, yea, and recompenſe their iniquity, and their ſin *double* firſt, and then be gracious to them, and love them, and be pacified towards them afterwards? And the prophet Iſaiah ſays, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, ſaith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jeruſalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accompliſhed, that her iniquity is pardoned; for ſhe hath received of the LORD'S hand DOUBLE FOR ALL HER SINS," Iſai. xl. 1, 2. Here a fact is ſaid to be accompliſhed, which upon your ſcheme can never be done to all *eternity*; for if every offence againſt God is of infinite magnitude, and deſerves infinite puniſhment, none can ever have received *ſingle* for *one* of their *ſins*, far leſs DOUBLE for ALL.

And therefore nothing can poſſibly be more evidently contrary to Scripture than your trite and common argument, that as, every ſin is of infinite magnitude, ſo it juſtly demerits infinite puniſhment,

iſhment, which as no mere creature can bear, muſt neceſſarily ſubject all who are recompenſed according to their own doings to *endleſs* miſery.

Beſides, If I was to grant you, contrary to Scripture, reaſon, and common ſenſe, that every offence is of infinite magnitude, and naturally deſerves infinite puniſhment: How would you prove from *that*, the certainty of *endleſs miſery?* Do you make nothing of the reconciliation which our Lord Jeſus has made for *all ſinners* and for *all ſins?*

Let me aſk you ſeriouſly, Did not Chriſt make a full and complete offering and propitiation for the ſins of the whole world? Is it not certain that his merits were far greater than the demerits of all mankind? Is he not the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world? If Chriſt died for all men, without exception, as you grant, and removed all their iniquities, and bore them away, and reconciled all to God by his death while they were enemies; much more as he has paid ſo great a price for their ranſom, he will recover them out of their loſt eſtate, and ſave them by his life. "Where ſin abounded, grace did (or ſhall) much more abound. That as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord," Rom. v. 20, 21.

I conclude, that let ſin be ever ſo great, the grace of God is greater; and if you will have it that ſin is of *infinite magnitude*, I hope you will not deny the propitiation of Jeſus Chriſt, which he made for all ſins, the ſame character. Therefore if you magnify ſin, and inſiſt upon the greatneſs of its demerit, I will endeavor to magnify the

the all powerful Redeemer above it, and ſpeak of his power to redeem all the human race, for whom he ſhed his blood. And then you will gain nothing in favor of the doctrine of endleſs damnation, by all your arguments founded upon the *infinity* of ſin: Chriſt being far more infinite to ſave, than ſin can be to deſtroy; and as he has undertaken to redeem and bring back thoſe who were loſt, there is no danger of his failing to perform it.

*Friend.* I muſt confeſs that what you have ſaid on this head entirely convinces me, that we cannot found the *eternity* of puniſhment, upon the *infinity* of ſin; and you have given me more ſatisfaction upon many points in theſe converſations than I ever expected to receive. I am indeed at length almoſt perſuaded to receive you ſentiments, though I once thought that it was impoſſible to anſwer all my objections, yet you have gone far towards it. Nay, I cannot at preſent recollect any thing material, but what you have anſwered. I would not however be too haſty in adopting this ſyſtem, but after your example conſider it well. But there is certainly ſomething more grand, beautiful, and harmonious in this view than can be found in any other ſcheme; for both the other ſyſtems end in darkneſs and black night, one in *endleſs damnation*, and the other in *gloomy annihilation*. But on your plan light riſes out of obſcurity, and a glorious day ſucceeds the darkeſt ſcenes. This view of things ſets the Book of divine Revelation in the moſt pleaſing light, and appears, for aught any thing that I can ſee, conſiſtent with the Divine perfections. But why, ſince you believe the univerſal Reſtoration, do you not mention

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tion it more freely and fully, in your public diſcourſes?

*Miniſter.* On the other hand, ſome aſk me, Why do you ever mention it at all in your ſermons; ſince it is not eſſential to ſalvation to believe it? To them I give theſe anſwers.

1. St. Paul declared to Timothy, that this univerſal Goſpel of God's being the Savior, or Reſtorer, of all men, but eſpecially of thoſe that believe, was a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation; and that they labored and ſuffered reproach, becauſe they truſted in God, as the univerſal Savior. But he was ſo far from being aſhamed of this belief, that he ſaid to Timothy, "Theſe things command and teach," 1 Tim. iv. 9, 10, 11. And ſo am I determined to do, at proper opportunities; notwithſtanding the reproach and contempt awaiting me for ſo doing.

2. Though it is frequently ſaid to be a matter of little or no conſequence, if true; yet, if it be any part of the record God hath given of his Son, (as I think I have proved) we are in danger of making him a liar, if we believe it not: See 1 John v. 9, 10, 11.

3. Though you may be Chriſtians, and not believe it; yet I cannot; though once I could alſo: But now the evidences of its truth appear ſo plain to my mind, that it would be criminal in me not to believe it; and ſince I do believe it, would it not be highly diſhoneſt in me to deny it? I have never done ſo yet, when aſked; and God forbid, that I ſhould be aſhamed to publiſh, what he has commanded to be made known.

4. I have commonly acted merely on the defenſive, and I never ſhould, that I know of, have

preached it in public, or but rarely, far leſs have written upon the ſubject, had it not been repreſented as a dangerous and deſtructive hereſy; and people been cautioned againſt hearing me, on that account.

5. I have been frequently deſired to preach upon the ſubject, expreſsly; and could not well refuſe, without betraying a cowardly diſpoſition.

6. I aſk, Who is the beſt man; he who preaches the truth contrary to his judgment, for intereſt, or to gain applauſe; or he that fairly ſpeaks as he thinks, without diſguiſe; although he knows that it will diſpleaſe his beſt friends on earth; even upon the ſuppoſition that he errs, in many points? If there be an heretic in the world, it is the man, who, for the love of money or applauſe, or through the fear of man, preaches that to others which he himſelf doth not believe. "He that is ſuch, is ſubverted, and ſinneth; being condemned of himſelf," Tit. iii. 11.

7. If we are to hold forth nothing to mankind, but what all are agreed in, we muſt diſcourſe upon very few ſubjects; for I do not recollect ſo much as one, but what people either diſagree about the thing itſelf, or the manner of explaining and holding it; No! not even the being and perfections of God; nor any point of doctrinal, experimental, or even practical religion.

8. We are to endeavor to teach mank ind what they know not, as well as to confirm them in what they are already taught; ſhould keep back nothing that may be profitable to them; ſhould give meat to ſtrong men, as well as milk to babes, and ſhould not ſhun to declare the *whole* counſel of God. We ought to juſtify the ways of God to men, to ſhew the

the necessity and harmony of Divine Revelation, and take pains to convert infidels; all which things are more promoted by this view than any other.

As to your question, why I do not dwell more upon it? I answer:

1. There are a thousand other subjects in the Bible, besides this; and all deserve consideration, according to their weight and importance.

2. I have an utter aversion to going always in the same round of matter or manner; and, therefore I frequently vary in both.

3. There are many other subjects of more present importance than the belief of this; such as, repentance, faith, hope, love, obedience, &c. and therefore ought to be more frequently insisted on, in proportion to their present use.

4. There are many scenes of providence and grace to take place in the universe, before the general Restoration; such as the Millenium, the calling of the Jews, the universal spread of the gospel through the earth, &c. These things are much nearer, and therefore the Scripture speaks more of them; and what God most speaks of, in his word, we should discourse of most to the people.

5. This doctrine, though it may have its use in converting men; and certainly enables those who believe it, to set forth the terrors of the Lord, and his mercies, in a more striking manner than otherwise they could; yet it is chiefly useful in comforting the people of God, and, in part, relieving them from that bitter anguish which their tender minds feel, from the consideration of the vast numbers that perish; and, therefore, may not be so proper,

proper for a popular audience as many other subjects.

6. The plan of this grand Reſtoration is ſo vaſt, includes ſo many different and ſeemingly contradictory diſpenſations, that it cannot be fairly ſtated, and fully defended, in one ſermon, and eſpecially the objections anſwered; and many perſons are not capable of taking in and digeſting at once, ſo many ſubjects as are neceſſary to the underſtanding of this matter, and have not patience to attend to a long ſeries of demonſtrations, arguments, and proofs; and, therefore, this doctrine ſhould not be introduced by any man, in any place, unleſs he has opportunity, to give it a fair inveſtigation; and, therefore, I never mention it at all, at my firſt preaching in any place; nor unleſs I have ſufficient opportunities to diſcuſs it.

7. *Chriſt* ſays to his diſciples—"I have yet many things to ſay unto you; but ye cannot bear them now," St. John xvi. 12. And St. Paul ſays—"And I, brethren, could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal; even as unto babes in *Chriſt*: I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able," 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age; even thoſe who, by reaſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed, to diſcern both good and evil," Heb. v. 14. Therefore, as the Savior and his apoſtles adapted their ſubjects and diſcourſes to the circumſtances of their hearers, and treated them in a gentle manner; ſo ſhould we. Prudence, patience, and care, ſhould always be uſed in diſcourſing on a doctrine ſo deep and awful as this; and,

and, eſpecially, as it hath been ſo little known of late ages.

8. I would wiſh to eſtabliſh well the firſt principles of Chriſtianity, before I meddle with any thing elſe; and as to the doctrine of the Reſtoration, I would rather that it ſhould ſeem to be naturally inferred from truths already known, than delivered as an independent ſyſtem: I, therefore, ſeldom or ever make it a leading point in my diſcourſes; but ſometimes lead to it, as a natural conſequence of what has been ſaid. After all, I would chooſe that men ſhould diſcover it themſelves, by carefully reading the Scriptures, without prejudice, believing them to be ſtrictly true; by living in love towards God and man; by walking in humility, often reflecting on their former eſtate; and conſtantly viewing the ſufficiency of *Chriſt*, and the boundleſs love of their great Creator; rather than to learn it of any man, far leſs ſtill, of ſuch an unworthy worm as I am.

9. As far as I know my own heart, truth, in love is my conſtant aim. I am unconnected with any party; and am not ſo prejudiced in favor of any thing that I hold, but that I would willingly be convinced in any thing, by proper evidence; and when ſo convinced, I am ready to retract publicly: As, therefore, I do not feel myſelf perſonally intereſted to ſupport the ſyſtem, right or wrong; I have, therefore, dwelt much leſs upon it, than moſt preachers do upon their particular ſentiments.

10. When I firſt embraced theſe views, I was obliged to give ſome account of my reaſons; and I choſe rather to do it by writing than preaching: Accordingly, I publiſhed my ſentiments, and anſwers

fwers to many objections ; which publications being in the hands of thofe to whom I preached, made it lefs neceffary for me to difcourfe upon thofe matters in public, or even in private, as I could refer to what I had written ; and with the fame view, I am inclined to publifh thefe familiar difcourfes, which we have had together ; after which it will be lefs neceffary than ever for me to preach the Reftoration publicly ; yet, I will not wholly avoid it, at convenient times, and in proper circumftances.

11. Laftly, as I know fo much of the nature of man, as to be fenfible that he turns, with difguft and loathing, from what is perpetually crammed down his throat ; but relifhes that which he falls upon, as it were accidentally, and comes into by little and little ; I have always made it a rule never to introduce it, in public or private, unlefs where it was earneftly defired, nor ever to continue it long together ; and, above all, never to queftion people upon the fubject, after difcourfing upon it ; afking them, faying, Do you believe it ? &c. Nor would I ever wifh to prefs them with the arguments at once, and oblige them immediately to yield ; as this kind of conduct, fo far from anfwering any good purpofes, commonly fets them againft what is thus intruded upon them. It is the beft way to give time and leifure to perfons, whom you would wifh to convince ; and let them exercife their own faculties.

*Friend.* I muft confefs that what you have advanced is highly fatisfactory to me, and I truft will be fo to many others, who may read thefe converfations, which I hope to have the pleafure of feeing in print before long ; and in the mean time,

time, I wiſh for a bleſſing to attend your labors, and that you may be an inſtrument of much good to mankind in your day and generation, and that you may obtain a crown of life from the Lord the righteous judge, in the day of his appearing.

*Miniſter.* I thank you muſt kindly for your benevolent wiſhes, I heartily wiſh the ſame bleſſing may come to yourſelf. And if I have been an inſtrument of giving you any ſatisfaction, let all the glory be to God, but let me have an intereſt in your prayers.

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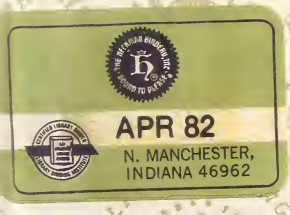

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